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THE MEMOIRS OF OUR FAMILY

Down To 1952

BY

MATTHEW E. CLANCY

Honor thy father and thy mother; so thou shalt live long to enjoy the land which the Lord thy God means to give thee. — EXODUS xx. 12

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THE MEMOIRS of OUR FAMILY

MATTHEW E. CLANCY

Rec'd aug 28-1978

To the

New England Historic Genealogical Society

Compliments of the author,

Matthew F. Clancy

Nihil obstat: ROBERT J. YATES, *Censor Deputatus*
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November 10 1952

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ERRATA

Page iv, line 13, for who read whom.
Page 7, line 17, for Fom read From.
Opposite page 12, final portrait, for 1933 read 1927.
Page 13, line 5, for Snyder's read Snyders'.
Page 16, second last line, for himeslf read himself.
Page 33, at end of line 16 add a.
Page 38, line 22, for Weisenfreunde read Wiesenfreunde.
Page 39, line 30, for prospects read prospect.
Page 40, line 8, before legally put mark of parenthesis.
Page 42, line 7, for north read east.
Page 45, line 10, for progidy read prodigy.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
THE SWANTON ENTERPRISE
SWANTON, OHIO

To the Memory of

My Father and my Mother

FOREWORD

MORE THAN is ordinarily realized or suspected we are creatures of heredity. Our physique in its smallest traits, our passions and their strength, the color of our temperament, even the quality of our thinking—each is genetically bequeathed us by our forefathers. And it is out of this heritage, our truest birthright, that we fashion our personalities.

We are the ones now up and about. But we are looking out of their eyes in a sense, and listening with their ears and talking in their tones and walking with the very gait that once was theirs. For somehow they go on living within us, leading a submerged existence in our beings long after they are dead. And were they known well at all today, the traces of their presence in our make-up would be unmistakable and marked enough to be startling.

Very likely, though, we are totally unfamiliar with our forefathers other than our parents and maybe a grandparent or two. What a pity those others whom we may have never even heard of should stand so close to us and yet be strangers! What a shame that we hardly have an idea what this earth looked like to them, or ~~who~~ whom it was they loved and what they had to suffer, or how in their own day they too worked and joyed!

Above history's great ones and living lords and ladies the most interesting people in the whole world to us are, or ought to be, the persons from whom we are descended, whose blood flows in our veins and whose smiles (or frowns) day by day meet and move across our faces—those humble men and women who have none left but us to honor them and none but us to treasure some stray souvenirs of their yesterday. And as it cannot now be given to rub elbows with them in the flesh, it would only be natural if we pined to have their story told at least and, hearing it told, cherished their names with a filial devotion.

These pages are meant to serve as a memorandum to posterity within the Clancy and the Welter strains. If you are of this stock, then those whose lives are resurrected here not only belong to you but even are part of you too in a way. For these are the men and the women who molded you to their own likeness in the germ and under God gave you your being, with the chance to become whatever you have become and to do whatever it is that you have done. Come, make their acquaintance, acquire some familiarity with their doings, seek the meaning to be found in their careers, keep the memory of their importance to you and yours alive.

Did you realize it, they and you are locked together now in a creative and a deathless embrace within the persons of your children. Meeting together there, the two of you have shaped the course of our family's bloodstream for as long as it happens to remain a tributary to the mighty current of our race.

St. Richard Rectory
Swanton, Ohio

FIRST PART

ON THE CLANCY-SNYDER SIDE

I

MICHAEL CLANCY: 1704 – 1827

FOR THE WANT of other, older information we pick up the thread of events at his birth in 1704. Likely he came into this world (as he left it) in a thatched cottage of the village of Castlecomer—a pleasant place on the River Dinin in County Kilkenny, Eire—where we first hear of him, dwelling with his son Matthew's family in the closing years of his life. His wife (younger than he and now long dead) had borne him this son back in 1782 at the time he was seventy-eight. And here he is, going on half a century later, still in the land of the living.

Castlecomer, which stands at the heart of the anthracite coalfield in Leinster, was notable because more than half the 'smokeless' coal mined in Ireland regularly used to come up out of the County Kilkenny pits. Old Michael, daily trudging the mile and a half to and from his job, was working at a colliery in the vicinity of Castlecomer. And it was fortunate that, though he had attained to a most extraordinary length of years, he was sound and agile; for depending upon him as their main support were his invalid son, the son's wife, and their family of nine children.

The day his namesake Michael, oldest of these grandchildren, reached his twenty-first birthday was an occasion calling for a celebration. So the two Michaels, a hundred years and more apart in age, set out to hike the twelve miles down the Dinin and Nore valleys to the county seat. It was a gala, red-letter day the young man never forgot. "Spry as a kid," his grandsire set the pace, keeping up a jog trot all the way. Round about them spread the billowing green hills where great St. Kieran had struck the light and fire of the Faith back in Patrick's day. Round about them too, like a second sunrise following centuries of black oppression, new hope was now brightening in the hearts of men at O'Connell's agitation for Emancipation. Possibly they 'took in the sights' at Dunmore Caves half way to town and wandered wondering at the huge stalactite pillars of those limestone caverns.

The city of Kilkenny, which has dwindled in size since, had a population of 20,000 at that time. Whether they stood and gazed at the loveliness of Kilkenny Castle on its precipice above the Nore, or sought out the crumbling old Town Gate on Abbey Street, or went to visit the majestic ruins of the thirteenth-century Dominican Black Abbey and Franciscan Friary, or only toured the marketplace for souvenirs to take home—whatever it was they happened to do that day made it a day forever memorable to young Michael.

All the more so since tragedy followed. For next day, May 11 1827, the "grand old man", doubtless having overtaxed his energy and powers of endurance, suddenly shut his eyes in death in Castlecomer at the enormous and amazing age of a hundred and twenty-three.

II

MATTHEW CLANCY: 1782 – 1827

MARY ELLEN CATON, wife of Matthew son of Old Michael, was short of stature; and Mary Clancy Fish a granddaughter (*seen in an early tintype*), herself less than five feet tall, related, "When I was young and still quite thin Father used to say I looked her image." Mary Ellen's age has not been handed down but when she gave birth on May 10 1806 to Michael, her first child, her husband was twenty-four years old. The other children born in the following twenty years of their union were: Thomas; James; Martin; Ellen; twin Margaret; twin Ann; Mary; and William.

In those days before the Famine and its sorrows the hills of Ireland were not yet covered with green pastures and dotted as now with grazing herds and flocks. Instead, all over the island the slopes lay plowed and planted to vast fields of potatoes, then the people's staple food. Only in this way could the land be made to feed the growing number of its inhabitants. In Matthew's own lifetime his country's population better than doubled, going from three million souls in 1785 to seven million in 1825. Underneath the pressure which this growth generated there lay age-old injustices at the hands of the English to keep Irishmen in unrest. For the people were prevented by device of law from holding office in their land and, despite their being a Catholic nation, were compelled by tithes levied upon the tilling of the soil to maintain the established Church of Ireland, which was an Anglican Protestant institution.

Like his father, Matthew was a coal miner. The Castlecomer collieries had been opened up in 1765 by Sir Christopher Wandesford and, as most things Irish requiring capital, were English owned. Working conditions were hateful. And there were grave occupational hazards. It is said the diggings flooded every winter. In 1823 a cave-in took place at one of the pits and they dug Matthew out still alive. He dragged his mangled body from room to room in his house for four years after that. Then, early in '27, death mercifully overtook him at the age of forty-five. Though we know his birthday fell on May 18, we do not find the exact day he died noted. However, it could not have been much in advance of the passing of his remarkable old father, who in the difficult times following the accident had kept the household going.

III

MICHAEL CLANCY: 1806 – 1891

COME OF AGE, Michael found himself become head of the household as well. And with youth's typical fearlessness and impatience he took a fateful step: forsook the mines and went to sea, shipping out of Liverpool on a sailing vessel *The Whale.* During the next five years he not only supported the family on his able seaman's wages but while at home on shore-leave fired his mother's and his grown brothers' interest in the New World, where his bark had made port more than once at New York and Quebec. Then when the great decision had been reached that the family would emigrate to America and the preparations for departure were made, Michael came for them while his ship was discharging its cargo across the Irish Sea. Thus it was that the widowed Mary Ellen Clancy, bravely gathering her children round her, in the year 1832 embarked upon that epic adventure—a pioneer immigrant mother well aware there was no turning back.

Any voyage by sail for six weeks from Liverpool to the St. Lawrence carried hazard and hardship: with people wanting sea legs in the gales, going without fresh water and with water always in short ration, cooking from sacks of potatoes over an open fire upon a crowded deck, and bedding down at nightfall in a stinking hold. But this particular passage was blacker than expected by far. As yet, however, no one saw the serpent that was coiled or heard the rattle's deadly warning; and we know that at least a part of the passengers were even finding a bit of happiness in their lot. The nine Clancy children ran from Michael, now in his twenty-sixth year, down to wee Will who was only six. Mary, next to the youngest, fondly fell to calling Michael "father". And Michael, who had a name for being a likable, seasoned young hand, was basking in the sunshine of the skipper's favor.

Then somewhere far out on the gray Atlantic calamity and panic climbed on board. All of a sudden the child Ann started retching with a violence that mere seasickness had never yet been known to cause; soon the tiny frame became racked beyond endurance with diarrhea, chills, and spells of dizziness; the skin blued; she fell into a coma. And even as the onlookers, eyes widening with horror, awakened to the sheer and awful strangeness of these seizures the Angel of Death descended and softly took the child by the hand. They buried her there at sea, wrapped up in a blanket and weighted with an anchor fluke. Meanwhile, others aboard who had dropped over too with similiar symptoms lay dying in their hammocks; and grief and terror, like a pair of cutlass-slashing mutineers, were in the act of capturing the ship's control. Mysteriously and helplessly the bark sailed on to doom. For Asiatic cholera—a virulent and epidemic pestilence new in Europe—had secretly taken ship for the New World with some infected traveller or seaman and, while these poor people were going on frantically in the dark as to their hideous stowaway's hiding places, was busy contaminating the ship's food and water supplies.

Turned into a floating pesthouse *The Whale* gloomily drifted on, languidly beating her way up the St. Lawrence to Montreal, passengers and crew expiring en route. Thomas, next in age to Michael, died in quarantine ashore, worn out from incessant hemorrhaging at the nose and on fire with fever and insatiable thirst. And there were forty-some others—immigrants, sailors, and citizens of Montreal—who died there with him on their pallets that day.

The family settled in Montreal, occupying quarters over a store where James took up apprenticeship at the meat-cutter's trade. Ellen entered into the employ of the Upper Canada Bank. And Michael, having given up the sea,

went off to New York State to work as a stone mason—a skill he had learned in the Old Country. As the first railroad beds in the United States were being laid out and developed at that time, there were many years of work ahead for masons such as him on bridges and embankments along the right-of-ways. The Mohawk & Hudson Railway, parent line of the New York Central System, had been started in '25; and we find Michael first at Syracuse and later at Elmira, engaged by the New York Central but also building walls and wells for homesteaders whose farms lay close to the tracks.

As the years passed by and the rails drew farther and farther west his returns to Montreal became infrequent and finally an estrangement from the family came about. Ill feeling had cropped up between him and Jim (concerning what we do not know) but he had not let this bother him any so long as his mother remained unaffected. The day came, however, when she took sides and set her face against him. Willie had run ahead in glee to cry out that Mike was back, and his mother threw up her window and called to him as he came:—Indeed he had the crooked left arm (it had been broken once) of her son Michael but, as this Michael of hers had been gone a long time and was reported to be a drunkard, how could his return now be expected to do the others any good? Black with indignation at this reception, he whipped out a reply that was a bitter decision:—Since his own mother had turned on him and now cast him in the role of a prodigal son, unworthy and unwanted, then by Heaven the family had seen their last of him! And it was true that Mary Ellen Clancy nevermore laid eyes on her first-born, as it was a fact that he did not return to Montreal again.

2

Going west with the westward push of the rails he came to Ohio in the days when Indiana was the 'Far West' and Ohio a frontier. Travel was by stagecoach or horseback still when he started working on construction of that remarkable trail-blazing railroad that was to open up the Ohio Country, sc., the Mad River & Lake Erie—which quit Sandusky in '35, struggled on to Bellevue in '38, and burst into Tiffin in '41. For having bulled that right-of-way into Seneca County ahead of the first locomotive Michael Clancy and the rest of this work gang of his are to be numbered among the pioneers of civilization in the area.

Hard at work in '42 on the Berwiek-Adrian section of the line, he struck up an acquaintance with a teamster by the name of John Stuter whom the Company had hired out of Rome, six miles away. Though the man was but twenty-two and hence Michael's junior by fifteen years, the two grew to be bosom friends. And when Stuter's team withdrew from the Mad River's pay as the tracks passed on out of this vicinity, Michael also severed relations with the railway and settled down in Rome, opening up a dray business and hiring John for his first driver. It was then 1844. Rome's population rose from 80 to 300 through the decade 1840-1850. And Rome and Risdon consolidated to form Fostoria in 1854.

For years Michael roomed and boarded at Fox's, which was then a popular establishment although no one any longer remembers its location. John Stuter, who stayed there too, married Eliza Ann Snyder sometime or other after 1852 (the year the John Snyder family moved to these parts) and went to live in a home of his own. Still a bachelor and a boarder, Michael was already at the age of fifty-three when Louisa Snyder, Mrs. Stuter's younger sister, happened to take housework at Fox's. Though she was only twenty-one and there was therefore a difference of thirty-two years between them, love leaped this hurdle. And going to Findlay, they were married on October 25 1859 by one Henry Byal, a justice of the peace, in the parlor of the local hotel.

Earlier that year, according to a document dated March 9 and issued at Common Pleas Court in Tiffin, he took out naturalization papers declaring him no longer a national of Ireland and a subject of Queen Victoria but henceforth an American citizen.

On January 21 of '61, his wife having already brought to light the first of their seven children, he purchased Lot 409 in Fostoria for $500. There in a frame house that still stands at 534 N. Main Street (it was only the second house on the street when they came there) he and Louisa raised the family they had. It was partly one- and partly two-storied, with eight or nine rooms. And to judge by the smaller proportions of some of the other old-fashioned homes that remain, it was rather good-sized for those days. Michael always kept it painted white and trimmed in green. The property ran through to Maple Street and there was a large barn standing in the middle of the lot as well as a smaller one at the far end of the premises. Now both barns and a woodshed once coupled to the house are vanished, and the old maple shade trees have gone the way of the cottonwood and been cut down. But the house itself, though moved back farther from the street, still bears the same siding and appears to be in a fine state of preservation, looking quite new even yet. The half of the property towards Maple Street was sold at Michael's death; upon Louisa's death the more important Main Street half was sold too.

Though Michael drank he was not a drunkard. Yet Louisa, abhorring liquor in any shape or form, could never be content realizing that now and then he did enjoy a drink. One day in '62 (David was already born) he found her in tears. She was crying because she, Mrs. Michael Claney, only had two dresses to wear, a homespun for weekdays and a calico for Sundays—to wash and iron the one she had to wear the other—and Mrs. Millhime, always flaunting smart silk dresses, only today had lightly confessed that it was the men's drinking expenses, Mike Claney's included, which were keeping the Millhime ladies garbed in fashion. Profoundly disturbed at this show of unhappiness in his young wife, he vowed (and kept the vow) never to take another drink. Nor did it ever make a whit of difference that she often used to twit him later with a reminiscence of what she referred to archly as her "little trick". At his death, almost thirty years after, two small barrels of very old whiskey lay in the cellar; his sons Joseph and Matthew ventured their opinion that it ought to be sold but their mother, like an early Carrie Nation bubbling with hatred of the stuff, insisted upon the casks being rolled out and smashed and burned while she looked on.

At birth of the first child, the boy Thomas, the father was fifty-four, the mother twenty-two. This was the baby that met with a tragic death when scarcely more than one year old. For he happened to be playing near the stove with wood shavings that caught fire when his mother had gone to the stables to prepare the horses' feed and he only lived long enough to be baptized by Mrs. Forrester, a Catholic neighbor lady. In Michael's eyes the death appeared a punishment from God because his son had not been christened by a priest. He had sinned, and sinned gravely, unwilling to displease his darling wife. And truly the great love he bore her had given to her militant Protestant upbringing a most unholy power, which she did not hesitate to use, to dissuade him from the practice of his religion. The story of his vital part in the early history of Catholicism in Fostoria will serve by force of contrast to show how really great in this respect her power was.

In 1843 the handful of Catholics then in Rome had been assembled by the noted pioneer Tiffin priest Father Joseph MacNamee, a bluff compatriot of Michael's who came when he could and said Mass for this little flock in James McDonald's log cabin on Tiffin Street near Main. Beginning in '47, for twelve years one of the Precious Blood Fathers from New Riegel regularly put in an appearance here once a month, at first holding divine services in the home of Nicholas Portz Sr., afterwards in the tiny rough frame St. Wendelin Church on Wood Street—a structure begun in '49 but not in use until '51. Whether kneeling at prayer in either of those hallowed parlors or sitting to a sermon in these rude pews of poplar planks that had wooden pegs for supports, Michael Claney was always a faithful worshipper and a familiar figure from the start. To Obermueller and Gales before St. Wendelin's was built as well as to Ganther, Austermann, and the others who served at the altar of the small mission church—to that prolonged train of German-speaking priests, this Irishman was a very pillar of the Faith. And in the *History of Seneca County* compiled by Warner, Beers & Co. (1886) Michael Claney's name is found prop-

erly recorded (page 612) in the little list of people who were members of this congregation before the founding of Fostoria.

It was in an unfortunate interim when Fostoria was bereft of even occasional visitations by a priest that Michael took his Protestant sweetheart to wife before a squire. Though the marriage was canonically valid, yet he fell from grace in failing subsequently to procure its blessing by a priest. Those in authority eventually decided, after recall of the New Riegel missionaries from St. Wendelin's, that the Fostoria mission should be Findlay's charge; but by the time Findlay received its first resident pastor Michael was, in Catholic parlance, a 'fallen-away'. As it turned out, however, God was never very far off from him in the dark. For by degrees the desire to be a Catholic took shape and grew within his wife, to her own utter amazement. She had been shaken by the strange intensity of her husband's spiritual remorse and grief at their young one's death and she had to live in daily contact with all the objects of Catholic devotion that he jealously kept about the house. One day (it was while she was carrying Ellen in '64) standing before the Virgin's statute in her home, she had a vision of the Glorious Lady commanding her to join her husband in the Faith. Father Michael Dechant, the Findlay priest, kindly gave her the required convert instructions and received her into the Church; her husband was restored to the Sacraments and the marriage union sanctified.

3

From an account of what it was like in his latter years, the dray business Michael ran consisted of hauling for merchants and manufacturers, making deliveries of freight, and shuttling transshipments between terminals. Not counting the carriers, with whom he normally did a large volume of business, he had variously forty to fifty standing local customers such as Leonard & Son, Stove & Barrel Factory, Cunningham & Co., Morgan & Rollen, Foster & Co., etc. Carried in his pocket was a notebook in which he kept track of the loads and charges that were to be entered in each individual firm's account; and at the end of every month accounts were closed by writing in the words "Settled and Paid". His ordinary rates were twenty cents a load and, in transfer of freight, four cents per one hundred pounds. He had a monthly income of a hundred dollars from the Brass & Iron Works alone. Though the town boasted twenty-six dray operators, the only ones with more than one or two drays rolling were himself and W. W. Brooks and Henry Seebon. These drays cost close to thirty-five dollars apiece; they were one-horsed, two-wheeled, and fifteen feet long. Michael stabled six horses, each capable of pulling a ton at full load. Besides his close friend and brother-in-law John Stuter he had as his drivers: Lou Wolf, Bill Wolfer, his nephew Halsey Stuter (John's son), and his sons David, Joseph, and Matthew Clancy.

When he married he did not know how to read or write. Intent on conquering his illiteracy because it seriously handicapped him in the conduct of his business and was a continual source of embarrassment, he hired a young college graduate to give him nightly lessons in his home, the course lasting six months. Since specimens of the hand he developed exist still, it can be shown that he learned to write clearly and easily and even with a flourish—no mean achievement in a man past fifty-three. And once he had learned how to read, he turned out to be a book lover all for exploring new worlds which the printed page unfolded to his gaze. His library came to comprise several hundred volumes mostly of religious tenor. Following is a list of books of his (arranged in order of publication, which may represent roughly the order of their acquistion too) that happen to be in the possession of his grandson Rev. Matthew E. Clancy:

Douay *Holy Bible* (1844)
Ray's *Third Book of Practical Arithmetic* (1857)
Instructions on the Catechism, by Rev. John Perry (1860)
In Heaven We Know Our Own, by Rev. Fr. Blot S.J. (1866)

History of Old and New Testament, by Rev. J. Reeve (1870)
Light In Darkness, by Rev. A. F. Hewit C.S.P. (1871)
The Catholic Prayerbook (1871)
Catholic National Third Reader (1875)
Our Saviour and Catholic Teachings, by Rev. S. B. Smith (1877)
Epistles and Gospels, by Rev. Leonard Goffine (1877)
Hand Dictionary of the English Language (1880)
Tributes of Protestant Writers, by James J. Treacy (1885)
Barnes' Historical Series: *A Brief History of the United States* (1885)
St. Michael, A Romance (1887)
The Church in Northern Ohio, by Rev. George F. Houck (1888)

Among the more important works missing from his collection are: Butler's *Lives of the Saints* (in four volumes); *Lives of the Fathers* (in sixteen volumes); *History of Martin Luther; Debate of Father Roswell and Bob Ingersoll;* and Miller's *Intercontroversy.*

His ability to spell, understandably, was not too great. On the flyleaf of Perry's *Instructions* underneath his name he transcribed the verse (*sic*):

If this book be borried by a friend,
Welcom he may bee
To read, to study, not to lend
But to return to me.

Again counted one of the best of Catholics, he made ample amends for ever having strayed from the flock. Applying himself with ardor to the study of controversial works and deriving aid in particular from Miller's *Intercontroversy,* he loved to 'talk religion' and was the direct instrument of five notable conversions to the Faith. During Advent and Lent he left off smoking and gave up eating meat as a penitential discipline. In 1879 when Father Matthias A. Arnoldi tore down the old wood church and then put up a more commodious one of brick, Michael contributed the fifth window on the south side (now removed and replaced.) The parish had had a resident pastor for something like eleven years by then. He got to be an excellent friend of Father Arnoldi's. Faithfully attending the children's Catechism Class on Sunday afternoons, and sitting down among them, he was liable to be called on when the boys and girls failed to respond. "Shame on you, you rascals!" Father Arnoldi would say. "Always leaving it up to the old gentleman in our class to answer the hard ones and save the day."

A similiar air of stark and childlike simplicity clung to his unreserved acceptance of the Christian gospel of charity and it got him the saintlike reputation of a Good Samaritan. For his house was ever a house-of-hospitality to people found in distress and he himself led the unfortunate and friendless to its door. Now it was some unwedded girl-mother cast out of her own home and given his home to have the baby in. Again it was entire families (it was once as many as four of them together) discovered destitute and forlorn and brought in under his roof to get back on their feet again. He even hit on a way to bless the memory of Mrs. Forrester for having baptized sweet Tom in the throes of death, when he took in her orphan son Michael and tenderly raised him as if one of his own.

4

Through the years he had carried on a passing correspondence with Montreal, by the good offices of friends no doubt at first but ultimately with his own pen. He knew how long his mother had been dead, knew the family

had prospered, knew what occupations the boys followed and which ones of the girls were married. Still, he never willingly dwelt on them and their affairs in the presence of his children and they never overheard him talking of such matters except when the Whealans, like himself from Castlecomer, dropped in to pay him their respects. Other Irish families in or about Fostoria with whom he often exchanged Sunday afternoon calls were the Welshes, the Maloneys, the McCartys, the Martins, and the Lannons.

His was a typically Irish beard: with hair on the neck and under the jaw but with chin and cheeks clean-shaven. His tongue was thick too with an Irishman's brogue; and if he ever had occasion to spell out words for you it was his "haitches" you remembered best of all. Enjoying a rich bass voice, he sang the sweet and plaintive airs of his native land delightfully. And yet he had, as people put it, "that stiff way about him" that draped his person in a wrap of dignified reserve and gently cautioned the discerning that he was not one to be trifled with or ever taken too lightly. Still, he was a peaceful man who loved a pipe in the calm of the evening, perhaps at a hard hour's exercise sawing cordwood, perhaps in leisurely quiet with his books.

He had cherished the hope of living as long as his astonishing grandfather, and it was a matter of some small pride to him that he had never had to have a tooth pulled or ever so much as felt a toothache. But in his eighties, still in the best of health and high spirits, one day he experienced a frightful accident. His dray coming down Sandusky Street, it happened that the horse after rearing up and plunging about in alarm bolted off wildly at the puff and shriek of an engine on the Erie. In the runaway the old man toppled off the seat and was smashed by the sluing right hub hard up against a splintering picket fence. As gently as could be they bore the broken body to his home more dead than alive. After a long, long time, when he found he was able to be about again hobbling on crutches, he summoned up all his remaining reserves of strength and stamina to pick his slow and tortured way to church for daily Mass. Once David brought him to a specialist in Cleveland who hospitalized him there; once he betook himself, crutches and all, on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady at Carey.

But he was in an advanced state of physical decay now, precipitated seemingly by his injuries. And he took to his deathbed at eight-five woefully short of breath and subject to recurrent strokes. Father Charles Griss, the pastor, brought the Last Sacraments and prepared him to meet his Maker. They say he made a prediction that his death would happen on November 9. At any rate, it was on that day in the year 1891 that the light in his eyes flickered and failed as he breathed his last. And *since he had never had his picture taken they made one* now that he lay dead—hence the stare so foreign to his looks alive. His body, interred at first in the old Catholic Cemetery, was removed to the new St. Wendelin's later, where the gravestone erected inaccurately alleges *ninety-five* to be the age at death.

5

In this man you see one of the earth's simple great, of whom there were no few among our bygone immigrants: common people of heroic mold and metal, now mostly unremembered and unsung. Contemptuous of hardships and obstacles that littered his path, Michael Clancy had effected the voyage of a family across the seas; smoothed a road for steel tracks and steam engines to advance to the frontier; as an early arrival in the pioneer settlement of his adoption, been a founding father to a parish and a town; and having built up a prosperous new business, topped off all the memorable exploits of his life by slaying the dragon of illiteracy barring his approach to the fabulous key-passageways of thought. Many such extraordinary, little, private lives are fast disappearing into the morning mists of our New World; and unless soon chronicled, these must now pass into undeserved oblivion and be namelessly buried in the potter's field of lost sagas strewn round the foundations of America's history.

IV

JOHN D. SNYDER: 1804 – 1862

HIS FATHER AND MOTHER held the distinction of being at the very spearhead of the advance of the bands of homesteaders who entered the 'Ohio Country'. None but woodsmen, trappers, traders, and several surveyors' parties—all, white men who left the primeval wilderness untouched—had ever been there before them as they made their clearing in the wood. At his birth, outside New Salem in Fairfield County in 1804, the redskins still hunted the forests, fished the streams, and took to the warpath here just as they had done through untold ages past. One kept an anxious weather eye to the smoke rising from the camp fires in any countryside where a tepee village stood. There were wolves and wildcats that lurked about, but the settler's deadly fear turned—lock, stock and barrel—on the plundering forays and scalping parties of the skulking Indians. Yet if you were at all like the parents of this baby, your fate lay wholly in God's hands. For the Snyders, who were of German stock and had come here from Pennsylvania, belonged to the Church of the Brethren, those professedly 'plain people'—as plain in piety as in manners and dress.

From eight to ten the boy lived in the thick of terrors starting up out of concerted Indian attacks provoked by the War of 1812. But the newly constructed blockhouses which made a brave sight and the swift, silent marches of a vigilant company of rangers who were indefatigable brought reassurance. And a thrill ran up the boy's spine when a group of neighbors, men whom he knew well, went to serve with the avenging forces of William Henry Harrison as scouts.

As a young man dwelling in a land where throngs of new settlers worked like colonies of beavers at clearing off the stands of virgin timber, John David took up the cabinetmaker's trade and, fashioning sturdy homestead furniture, plied it diligently to meet a great demand. In 1824, at twenty, he married Caroline Cline, then a maid of sixteen. In the quarter century that followed, their family of thirteen children was brought into the world all in Fairfield County.

In 1852 the Snyders migrated to the outskirts of Fostoria (a name given only two years later to the town) and here, while he went on with his cabinetmaking, with the children's help John also turned to farming. The dwelling which the family occupied is still standing right across from Fountain Cemetery on Lynwood Avenue. Near it in those days was a pure, ever-flowing spring and roundabout were heavy woods. In this household an Old Testament reverence for the Sabbath held sway, feed for the horses even being readied beforehand and needing but to be shoved under their muzzles when Sunday came. Mr. Snyder was an elder many times re-elected to office in the local congregation of the Brethren. Yet when his daughter Louisa married a Catholic he did not display the coolness towards her of the rest. His being an elder tells us he was literate, else performance of his functions was not possible.

Having previously suffered some sharp heart attacks, he pitched over dead in his wheat field (the present St. Wendelin Cemetery) on April 27 1862 at the age of fifty-eight. His grave is in Fountain Cemetery, its position designated by an obelisk monument across from the place where he lived.

V

CAROLINE CLINE: 1808 – 1878

BEING A SOUTHERNER, she called herself "Cah-uh-lun". Born at Winchester in Virginia in 1808, of colonial English blood, she doted on reminiscences of her childhood days in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley, where apparently the Clines were slave-holders enjoying prominence and courtesies. Harking back to the devotion of their dutiful colored folk in the days of yore, she would paint lovely word-pictures of the mammies who served them as nurses and cooks. And your mouth watered at her description of the cakes such as one old negress baked.

There at Winchester, oldest Virginia city west of the Blue Ridge, a pair of famous trails crossed. And since there was a spirit of speculation and daring in the air, it is not surprising that Caroline's people sometime prior to the year 1824 mingled with the traffic heading for the 'Far West'—that ceaseless stream of flying horseback riders, fast free-wheeling stagecoaches, clattering Great Western mailcoaches, and rumbling Conestoga freight wagons pulled by double teams with tinkling bells at their hames. Built by act of Congress, the National Pike had struck out on the Cumberland Road in '11 and reached the Ohio River at Wheeling in '18. But as there was a lapse of seven years before the Pike's construction was taken up on the Ohio side of that formidable river barrier—and by that time Caroline already was John D. Snyder's wife in Fairfield County—it follows that the Clines left the broad macadam and tollgates of the Pike behind them and pushed on through the forest up the windings of Zane's Trace into the state's interior.

We can only guess what drew them to these parts. Presumably the reason lay with George Cline, an uncle of Caroline's who as early as 1806 (two years before her birth in Virginia) was a duly registered taxpayer of Greenfield Township in Fairfield County. Anyhow, the same sort of thing took place afterward in her life when George's son David and his Virginian-born wife Rebecca moved to Seneca Township in Seneca County in '49. For we find the Snyders following this cousin of Caroline's northward three years later on and going to Fostoria to live. David, a carpenter, was four years the junior of Caroline.

Sometime subsequently to her husband's death in '62 Mrs. Snyder took up residence on County Line Street across the way from the present location of St. Wendelin High School. The small one-storied house in which she spent the remainder of her years is still in use today. *Dating from the start of her widowhood comes an excellent charcoal sketch*, the only likeness of her ever made. God-fearing in her staunchly Protestant way, she had striven to imbue her children with utter abhorrenee of playing cards and liquor. That a daughter of hers had changed religion in after years was a hateful fact to which the old lady simply would not be reconciled, and from her very deathbed she called on Michael Clancy's wife to renounce the Catholic Faith—and died defeated, with Louisa in tears yet adamant. She was seventy when the end came on August 11 1878. Burial was made in Fountain Cemetery at her husband's side.

VI

THE CHILDREN OF JOHN D. SNYDER AND CAROLINE CLINE

Mary Jane	*born:*	Feb. 5 1825
Eliza Ann		Mar. 4 1827
Elizabeth Charlotte		Feb. 2 1829
Caroline Matilda		Mar. 28 1831
George Cornelius		Aug. 24 1833
Catherine		Feb. 13 1836
Louisa		May 18 1838
Eli A.		May 13 1840
Christy Ann		Mar. 12 1842
John William		Sep. 7 1844
Harvey Benton		Oct. 4 1846
Allen Trimble		Oct. 4 1846
David Meredith		Mar. 10 1849

Four died in infancy: MARY JANE, the first-born; CAROLINE MATILDA; and HARVEY BENTON and ALLEN TRIMBLE, the twins.

ELIZA wedded John Stuter. *Ch.* Caroline; Mary; Lucinda; Allen; Halsey; Christy; Meedy; Charles; William; Charlotte. Her death occurred on October 12 1904 at the age of seventy-seven.

CHARLOTTE became the second wife of Michael Fry.

GEORGE espoused Rebecca Runyon, and was seventy-one at his death in 1904.

CATHERINE wedded William Deary. *Ch.* James; George; Mary Ann. When he died upon a battlefield of the Civil War, she married Peter Jones. *Ch.* Eli; Elsie. She was in the eighties when she departed life.

LOUISA was joined in marriage to Michael Clancy. *Ch.* Thomas; David; Ellen; Joseph; Mary; James; Matthew. She passed away on November 30 1896 at fifty-eight.

ELI wedded Delilah Younker. *Ch.* George; Orlo; William; Frank; Howard. He was eightly-one at the end in 1921.

CHRISTY entered into wedlock with a Mr. Alexandra. *Ch.* three boys, one girl.

JOHN was a colorful character but the name of his spouse and his ultimate age are not of record.

DAVID took Ella Kayser to wife, and was seventy-eight when he expired in 1927.

Eli and John saw duty with the Union Army in the Civil War. John's enlistment was: June 10 1861, Ohio Infantry, Company A, 8th Regiment. Eli's: August 12 1862, Ohio Infantry, Company I, 123rd Regiment. Both were pensioned by the government and are buried under the standard of the G. A. R. Eli was a calm and likable youth—John, a windy madcap fitly assigned to a demolition squad detailed to wreck bridges, burn houses, and the like; and after the war conducting himself as a 'common drunk', he was branded the black sheep of the family.

John Stuter, friend and brother-in-law of Michael Clancy, was born March 4 1821 and died January 17 1878 at fifty-six. William Deary, also a brother-in-law, was a fellow Catholic of Michael's; among the personal effects sent back from the battlefield on which he fell were his prayerbook and beads.

CAROLINE CLINE SNYDER
1808-1878

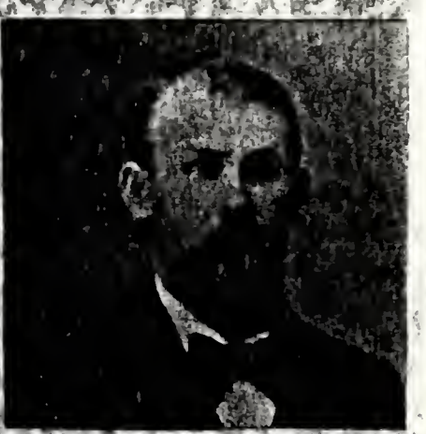
ELIZA ANN SNYDER
1827-1904

CHARLOTTE SNYDER
1829- ?

GEORGE SNYDER
1833-1904

CATHERINE SNYDER
1836- ?

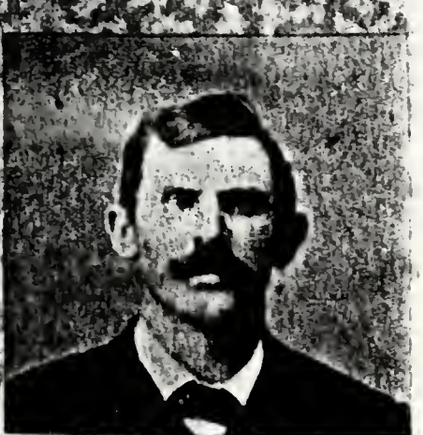
LOUISA SNYDER
1838-1896



ELI SNYDER
1840-1921

CHRISTINE SNYDER
1842- ?

JOHN SNYDER
1844- ?



DAVID SNYDER
1849-~~1933~~

VII

LOUISA SNYDER: 1838 – 1896

TO PRONOUNCE HER NAME as they did, you must use the long English *i* (as in *I*saac), and not the Continental *e* sound heard all about us today. She began life on May 18 1838, seventh child in the family, her mother thirty, her father thirty-four. By the time of the ~~Snyder's~~ Snyders' removal from Fairfield County to Fostoria she had grown to a girl of fourteen. Afterwards she recalled how she laughed to see all the new log huts thereabout—until her own people made one of them their residence. For one reason or other she had only had a small amount of schooling, no more than requisite to impart the rudiments of reading and writing. But they expected her from then on to earn her keep by working out when opportunity offered. The first job she held (it paid all of seventy-five cents a week) was at a home on a farm where she had her baking to do in an out-oven. Years after this initial experience she came to Fox's Place, a boardinghouse at the edge of town, to help get the meals, wait table, and do the dishes and the silverware.

Among the lodgers at Fox's was the elderly Irish gentleman Mr. Michael Clancy, whom she married in 1859. Since she was youthful and rosily vivacious and he adored his darling wife and would not have hurt her feelings for the world, she could and she did subvert his Catholic practice. Five years later, however, she herself became a convert to the Catholic Church, to the deep displeasure and unending reproach of her mother. And in '78 when the Widow Snyder lay at death's door and wailed that she could not die with Louisa a Catholic, Louisa replied sadly: "Mother, you might live till doomsday and I would not turn my back upon the Faith."

Yet she was her mother's daughter and had an inbred horror of gambling and drink. So she would not rest until she hit upon a way of turning her husband into a teetotaler; and some of the draymen knew from sad experience how she would instantly smash a man's bottle left lying carelessly behind in the barn for her eyes to light on. So too, once when she happened to see some of the drivers dealing out a pack of cards intending to play a friendly game, she flung from their presence in a huff. Let them go to the Devil hankering for fun—thank God, she did not have to stay one minute where the demon was!

But though her feelings seemed curiously intense in matters affecting deep-rooted sensibilities she possessed. she was ordinarily a most serene and sunny person, altogether sociable, almost easy-going, a woman fond to excess of husband and children and idolized by them in turn. Dark-haired, brown-eyed, normal in height, as she aged she fleshed out until somewhat heavy-set. A peculiarity of hers derived from pioneer parents and the Colonial tradition was to count out money in shillings. She was in the habit of sitting for long hours in a high-backed rocking chair in her concluding years contentedly smoking a clay pipe, with a box of Maple City tobacco at her side.

Anointed by Father Charles Griss, Mrs. Clancy passed away November 30 1896, five years after her husband. Her age was fifty-eight. Cause of death is alleged: "typhoid fever, complicated by pneumonia." Her body rests in St. Wendelin Cemetery next to his.

VIII

THE CHILDREN OF MICHAEL CLANCY AND LOUISA SNYDER

Thomas	*born:*	Aug.	7	1860	*died:*	Sep.	3	1861	*aged:* 1
David		Sep.	7	1862		Nov.	20	1940	78
Ellen		Oct.	22	1864		Dec.	31	1914	50
Joseph		Mar.	6	1867		Mar.	8	1930	63
Mary		Jul.	25	1869		Oct.	20	1945	76
James		Oct.	26	1871		Oct.	26	1871	0
Matthew		May	18	1873		Oct.	24	1936	63

THOMAS CLANCY and JAMES CLANCY both died in infancy. Thomas was buried in Fountain Cemetery; James, in the Old Catholic Cemetery.

DAVID CLANCY MARRIED ANNA BETTINGER. There was one child: WILLIAM, who died unmarried in his twenties.

Soft-spoken, well-mannered, and obliging, David got along with people effortlessly. At first a railroader, later he learned and followed the hatmaker's trade, living in St. Louis a long time. His burial place is St. Wendelin Cemetery.

ELLEN CLANCY MARRIED CHARLES COPELAND but had no children.

The Copelands lived in Logansport, Indiana, where Charles owned and operated a jewelry store. Ellen was of a lively, wistful, and buoyant disposition. Her remains lie in St. Wendelin Cemetery.

JOSEPH CLANCY MARRIED ELIZABETH FOBURG. There were eight children: MARY (*m.* Reinhold Weiss: *ch.* Naomi, Frank); ANNA (*m.* Samuel Kramer: *ch.* Delight); CHARLES (unmarried), who fell on the Meuse-Argonne battlefield in 1918 (16th Infantry, Company D); ALPHEUS (unmarried); MATILDA, who died in childhood; ALOYSIUS, who expired in childhood; ANITA (*m.* Charles Schwald); LOUISA (*m.* William Gangway: *ch.* Joseph, Betty Lou, John Leroy).

Joseph's family lived at 401 W. Lytle Street, Fostoria. A pleasant, unassuming, devoted family man, he was a railroader all his life. His grave is in St. Wendelin's.

MARY ('DOLLY') CLANCY MARRIED FRANK FISH. There were seven children but they all died in infancy.

The Fishes resided in Fostoria. Through her long widowhood Dolly kept roomers at Buckley and Sandusky Streets. Ever jolly, she was known for her sprightly smile. She was laid to rest in St. Wendelin's.

MATTHEW CLANCY MARRIED ROSE WELTER. There were seven children: MARIE (*m.* Edward A. Holtz: *ch.* Edward, Richard, James, John, William, Jeanne, Roseann, Carolyn Sue); LUELLA (*m.* Wayland B. Recker M.D.: *ch.* Lou Ann, Patricia, Robert, Mary Janet); MATTHEW, a priest of the Toledo Diocese; JAMES, a priest of the Redemptorist Congregation; ROSE (*m.* Alfred T. Murphy: *ch.* Thomas, Gerald, Michael, Patrick, Rosarita, Charles, Alice Jean, Terrence, James, Linda); JOHN, who did not survive; ROBERT (*m.* Betty Murphy: *ch.* Colleen, Diane).

The home of the M. C. Clancy family was at 1016 N. Elizabeth Street in Lima. His occupation was railroading. His body reposes in Gethsemane Cemetery. A full biographical account of him follows.

MICHAEL CLANCY
1806-1891

LOUISA SNYDER CLANCY
1838-1896

DAVID CLANCY
1862-1940

ELLEN CLANCY
1864-1914

JOSEPH CLANCY
1867-1930

MARY CLANCY
1869-1945

MATTHEW CLANCY
1873-1936

LOUISA SNYDER
1838-1896

IX

M. C. CLANCY: 1873 – 1936

MATTHEW CHARLES CLANCY (he had rather his name were used as "M. C. Clancy" and himself penned his signature that way) had the same birthday as his mother and his paternal grandfather, sc., May 18; and he was the latter's namesake. Seventh and last child in the household, he emerged from the womb when Louisa his mother was thirty-five and Michael his father sixty-seven, sc., in the year 1873. His baptism, of which there is no extant record, was administered at St. Wendelin's by a priest from Findlay. (*Our earliest likeness of him is from a tintype at the age of three.*)

Father Arnoldi, made resident pastor of Fostoria in '75, opened a parochial school which young Matthew attended. But the lad did not seem to like class and sometimes absented himself at will for slight reasons, admonished often not to do this by his father but abetted in it on the sly by his mother who babied him. Yet as he was pretty much of a daredevil, oblivious of danger and quite content to pay the piper if he failed, this absenteeism of his in some part came of accidents and injuries rather than the common prank of playing truant. What might easily have been the most serious of these mishaps of his boyhood was a thirty-foot fall from the rooftree of the big barn in their yard, the foolhardy scamp landing on the rungs of a ladder; yet nothing worse came of it than a rib fracture. (*There is a picture of him at the age of thirteen, standing at the front yard gate.*)

He made his First Communion on June 5 in '87 at fourteen, Father Joseph P. Gloden, then pastor, filling out his certificate in the name of *Mathias* Clancy. To the disappointment of his father, who had hoped he would want to go on with his studies, he left school now and started looking for work. His job-seeking ended with Michael taking him into the dray line's employ. For a while he went railroading at the age of seventeen but, as his father remained dead set against the idea of his sticking to such a hazardous occupation, before long he returned to the drays. Among the many other things besides driving which Michael gave him to do was the leveling of their Barn No. 2 at the far end of the lot. This curious building—a cooper shop brought here from its original location—was made of black walnut throughout barring only the roof shingles; and Michael, fearing it would take fire and burn down, had determined he would salvage such valuable wood.

By strange coincidence Matthew was brought home badly hurt by a saw-wheel at the same time they were carrying his half-dead father into the house in the wake of the Sandusky Street runaway. David, Ellen, and Joseph had married and quit home by date of their father's death and it was left for Matthew and his sister Mary Fish to look after affairs of the dray line for their widowed mother. This Matthew did, as manager, from the time he was an adolescent of eighteen until he had attained the age of twenty-three. Along with others Lou Wolf, Frank Fish, and John and Joseph Sandlebach were his drivers. To bring the line up to modern standards, the obsolescent one-horse, two-wheel drays gave way to brand-new two-horse, four-wheel vehicles; simultaneously the load-weight was cut and the teams were kept moving at a spanking trot, speed in handling being the new objective.

2

Fortunate those who then were young! For this was a unique era in the life of our nation—the era that history, touched by nostalgia, now wistfully dubs the 'Gay Nineties'. Matthew played a banjo in a string septet of three

banjoes and four guitars. And a fine figure the seven musicians cut—with their smart dark suits, their single-ply stiff collars, their great-knotted four-in-hands, and him one of two affecting a mustache. (*A fellow musician's hand rests on his shoulder in the picture of him taken off a portrait of this players' group.*)

They were entertaining at the Frenchtown parish lawn social in September of '94 when a Miss Susan Welter (she had become acquainted with the band from working in Fostoria) gave Mr. Clancy an introduction to her sister Rose—and immediately a spark was struck for time to fan prettily into flame. In less than a year from that eventful moment of the genesis of their love the courtship blossomed out in nuptials: a license to marry being issued at Tiffin on August 17 1895 to "M. C. Clancy and Rosa Welter" and, the banns having been proclaimed, the wedding itself solemnized on August 19 in the parish church of the bride. Serving as best man and maid of honor were Garrett Berry and Susan Welter; and uniting the handsome couple—groom twenty-two, bride twenty-three—in the bonds of holy matrimony was none other than Michael Clancy's old friend Father Arnoldi, Frenchtown pastor at this time. (*The picture representing Matthew in manhood without mustache is the one mounted on their marriage certificate.*)

But many a vicissitude lay in the offing and turbulent clouds soon darkened their sun. For, borne down and practically smothered under disappointments and reverses, the first years of their married life seemed years to try a Job. To begin with, the dray business became tangled in litigation when the executor of the Michael Clancy estate decided to start suit for recovery of arrearages of over $30,000 in the account of the Nickle Plate Ry. But having done this he did no more; he never followed the action up by pressing for a settlement, in court or out of it either. So perfect and unbroken his record for doing nothing, it betrayed some stripe of criminal intent or negligence. Time dragged by and the case fell through, going by default. After that the railroads in concert turned the intracity transport over to competitors, Peck first, then Seebon; and the net result of the mishandled lawsuit lay in a sweeping loss of the terminal transfer business with a disastrous slump in the income and earnings of the line. Sequel to the fiasco was a sheaf of notes in the hands of this man eating up the profits of the enterprise.

Signing over all that he possessed, Matthew struggled feverishly and single-handed against impending ruin of the line. Living in with his widowed mother were he and Rose, and Mary and her husband, Frank Fish the driver. Fish, an 'in-law' expecting to profit from the estate, turned into a trouble-maker given to persistent fault-finding and periodic tirades. In an atmosphere of that sort, rife with suspicions and recriminations that engendered bad blood, tempers got to be trigger-quick, voices waxed explosive; and with feelings running so high, living under the same roof was intolerable any longer. Yet at Dolly Fish's tearful plea and for his mother's sake Matthew did stick it out—until the day a newly bought span of horses involved in an accident had to be shot and, their carcasses not yet grown cold, the fellow whose shillyshallying had caused the lawsuit's forfeit burst on the scene demanding settlement there and then of his lien against the animals just destroyed. That was the finish! Now there could be no more hope of living peaceably with Fish; and suddenly it was as clear as day there was no hope left now of saving his mother's dray line or supporting his uncomplaining wife either—on ever-mounting debt. And since that was the case, in the spring of '96 he sold out his share of the equipment and quit the business. Departing from the old home, he and Rose moved into an upstairs apartment on Poplar Street.

3

As is so often the case, their plight had to worsen before the situation would slowly start to mend. The young husband, now saddled with heavy obligations, went about looking desperately for work and wages in a period of depression and hard times. Once he offered ~~himself~~ himself for hire as an apple-picker at fifty cents a day. Anxious to make a start of one kind or another at satisfying creditors, he sold a cow that was his to Rose's mother at her

cheering offer to buy. On receipt of a (fraudulent) report of Dave's death he could only give five dollars for the corpse's transportation, as that was then everything he had to his name. In an air of mounting dejection they moved that fall to Lytle Street and poorer quarters. And then came his mother's death, blotting out his great mountain of misfortunes in the raging snowstorm of his grief. But he drained his cup of misery and humiliation down to the dregs that spring when it became necessary for them to break up housekeeping. He went off to take a job in the oil fields of Cygnet; she went back to Frenchtown. Usually they spent the weekends with one another there.

But by Christmas in '97 the sky had taken on a lighter east. They resumed life jubilantly together in Columbus, where he had been in the employ of the Hocking Valley since early fall—thus setting out on a lifelong career as a railway switchman in the yards or on the road. They resided for a time on McDowell Street, for a time on Chapel Alley. There in the state capital Marie Clara, their first child, was born March 25 1898 on the crest of a flood which drove them from their home. The Spanish-American War broke out one month later to the day and in a spirit of patriotism he went up to the depot when he could to see the troop contingents off.

A job transfer brought them to Toledo in the spring of '99, where they resided in the ten-hundred block on N. Erie Street. Ailing with quinsy and someone failing to mark him up sick on the board, he was let go in 1900. As his brother Dave happened to be working in Lima at that time, he took his wife and child there and was soon switching on the old C.H.&D., the later B.&O. They lived a while on E. High Street with the Copelands, relatives of Ellen's husband; then rented a five-room house at 514 N. Elizabeth Street, next door to their landlady the kindly Mrs. Lawlor. There Harriett Luella was born on April 29 1901. With him down in Texas on a job loan that fall, his wife and the two infants waited out his absence at Frenchtown. Though his stay in the Southwest was a matter of several months only, his memories of that part of the world—Dallas and El Paso and Old Mexico—never lost their freshness through the years.

They were back in the house on Elizabeth Street early in '02. (*The picture of him in the double-ply collar is taken from a photograph of the family group of about this time.*) Here the birth of two sons took place: Matthew Edwin on May 7 1903; James David on May 2 1905. Now father of four children, he began remembering 'close calls' that he had at work and, worrying about the risks that a job like his carried, he debated with himself whether he ought not to quit railroading, in the end making up his mind he would do it as soon as some promising opportunity offered. While on a work assignment in Cleveland in September of '06 he became persuaded he spied his golden chance: a restaurant on Woodward Avenue up for sale. So he bought out this business with hard-earned savings from past pay envelopes ever so carefully laid up by his wife in memory of their former destitution. But soon sadly disappointed in the venture, he re-sold the restaurant and signed back on his trainman's job. His wife with the little ones came to join him here in the spring of '07 and they lived on Professor Avenue four months.

But they found their way back to Lima like homing pigeons in September, taking up their abode in a five-room house at 531 N. West Street, just three doors from St. Rose School. There another daughter and another son were born: Rose Margaret on July 30 1908; John Nicholas on June 30 1911; the latter only living a matter of hours. Suffering fearfully from quinsy in this period of his life, Matthew had quit the railroad service—to work in turn at street paving, on building construction, and in the locomotive plant. In September of '10, however, he had resumed his switchman's post on the B.&O., never again to leave that Company's employ.

They had always rented houses up to then. Now, entering their forties with a family of five children, Matthew and Rose decided they wanted badly to have a home of their own. Feeling confident that their modest savings,

bolstered by money she had gotten from the proceeds of her mother's estate, would warrant this weighty undertaking, they obtained title to two unimproved lots at 1016 N. Elizabeth Street; and a house was procured on W. High Street to be moved to that location. Into this house, renovated and remodelled extensively to make eight rooms and bath, the Clancy family entered with delight in August in '14, right at the outbreak of World War I; clouding their title was a twenty-year mortgage held by the Citizens Loan & Building Ass'n. Here the birth of Robert William, the last baby, took place on May 10 1915. The Redemptorists organized St. Gerard Parish in Lima's north end in '16 and put up the combination church-and-school in '18; in particular, Father Mulligan and Father Behr became enshrined in the hearts of this household.

4

In the Twenties Mr. and Mrs. Clancy watched their sons and daughters one after the other go from home like fledglings flying the nest. In '20 James left for Northeast, Pennsylvania, intending to enter the Redemptorist Congregation. In '21 Matthew E. went to enroll at a minor seminary at Catonsville, Maryland. Marie became the wife of Edward Holtz in '22. Luella married Dr. W. B. Recker in '26. Rose M. became Mrs. Alfred T. Murphy in '28. And so then there was only young Robert still at home with his parents.

But if the house had grown emptier, soon there were compensating consequences that brought hearty congratulations pouring in on them from every side, leaving a quiet well of happiness behind. For in '23 Marie bore a child, their first grandchild—which was the start of another generation in the succession of descendants destined to rise up and bless the names of Matthew and Rose. And then (pious Catholic parents regard it as a mark of distinction and find it a source of vast content to have even *one* son a priest) the two sons in the seminaries were both ordained to the priesthood and came home to sing a First Mass at St. Gerard's: Father Matthew in '29, Father James in '32.

Meanwhile, the forebodings of the past unhappily had come true: Mr. Clancy became crippled in an accident at work on September 25 in '29. What happened was the thing a switchman always had to fear might happen while he was cutting off a boxcar, tankcar, or gondola. Clinging to the side of a rolling freight car as it swayed and jolted down a siding, he had a hand-bar pull out and throw him off. Landing on a rail in his fall and striking his left knee a hard, glancing blow that tore a lateral ligament, he was disabled for any further railroad service and thus unexpectedly found his working days concluded at the age of fifty-six. After that he walked with a cane to relieve the twinges of pain in his kneecap and prevent his leg from wobbling when the weight was on it. In '31 when the B.&O. settled the amount of compensation he had coming to him because of this injury, his employment record with the Company stretched out over a total of twenty-seven years and eight months, with something better than twenty years of it continuous service.

As things turned out, this accident very likely was a blessing in disguise. For it was discovered in the course of a clinical examination occasioned by the knee injury that he had heart disease in an advanced stage, the prognosis given indicating death in thirteen months. Actually he was to live a good five years more, surviving an appalling sequence of acute coronary spasms, all so ruthless it was a wonder no single one of them destroyed him. In the midst of his cardiac pangs he put forth supreme and sustained efforts to fight off the narcotic effect of morphine administered by his doctor; and usually he managed to retain consciousness by sheer will-power even under a double dose of the drug. If he was going to die, he said, he much desired to be aware of what was happening to him. Most difficult to bear of an invalid's trials for him was the humdrum of inactivity—until the regular news reports captured his interest on the radio and began absorbing his attention and time. Chasing the news

flashes and commentators' programs round the clock, thereafter he made it a point to be always fully informed on world happenings and on civil affairs; and he welcomed any opening you gave him for a sociable discussion on some burning issue of the day. In between times his beads, worn from fingering, would be making a continuous circuit in his hands and, as long as he was equal to it, he continued saying rosaries by the dozen through the day.

His last illness set in five days ahead of death. Again, once the initial paroxysm had passed, his heart had returned to its clocklike beat. This time, however, hypostatic pneumonia developed and his respiration grew labored. With his sons and daughters at his bedside and the two priests leading the rest in the Litany Of The Dying, he breathed his last on Saturday morning October 24 1936 at the age of sixty-three. Burial was made the following Tuesday in Gethsemane Cemetery, where there is a tombstone set up to mark the grave.

5

Of short and stocky build, M. C. Clancy was dark-haired until age grayed him. In sharp contrast, the beard he sometimes wore against the winter's cold was red. He is oftenest remembered as he commonly appeared: dressed in a railroader's togs with lunch-box and lantern in his hands. Though a heavy cigar smoker, at work he chewed tobacco instead, his safety there depending on freedom and employment of both hands. Once married, he was never known to drink a drop of anything with alcoholic content, even beer. In his early manhood not only had he been a banjo player but he had done an excellent painting of a horse in oils. As an older man he manifested a variety of handy skills, among other things proving himself dextrous at carpentering, laying cement walks and steps, and casting concrete blocks on a hand machine. Besides, he collected old coins, raised Ancona chickens, and year by year made vegetable gardens of great size.

Perhaps the most singular thing about him was his astonishing warmheartedness and good humor. Only to meet a man was enough for him to be the best of friends with him and somehow he prompted feelings of neighborliness and a show of camaraderie on the part of everyone he knew. In particular he was ever a regular intimate of the parish priests. Keeping a fund of jokes and funny stories constantly on hand, he always saw the lighter side of life and always bore a winsome sparkle in his eye; wherever he went they welcomed him as 'good company'. And because he enjoyed living and loved life so much, for him it was a grievous thing to have to die —and leave his world of human friends behind. Even the littlest children addressed him with easy familiarity as "Matt" in his old age. And all the neighborhood toddlers, not grasping the meaning of his being dead, trooped in to see their old crony as he lay sleeping in a funny bed on the eve of going away, when people told them he was never coming back.

SECOND PART

ON THE WELTER-MATHIAS SIDE

I

LEWIS MATHIAS: 1814 – 1878

LUXEMBURG, the land of his birth, was bathed in blood and tears for a full score of years before him. Overrun by the self-styled 'liberating' armies of the French Republic, this diminutive Catholic nation (but it had twice the territory then that it has now) was at wit's end to make head or tail of the vaunted new Age of Freedom which arrived parading guns of war and flying flags of sacrilege and plunder yet expected to be greeted with rounds of appreciation and applause. Claptrap and fraud! A new Age of Iniquity, that's what it was! Their sons conscripted for service in the armies of France, their silver money seized in exchange for inflationary paper francs, the entire realm transformed into a rat's-nest of rapacity, extortion, and tyranny—God knew, this was bad enough at the invaders' hands. But there were things worse still: vile, depraved, atrocious developments stamped with the hoofprints of the very devil.

When the church doors had been bolted and padlocked in numbers before the people's face, it drove the nation to distraction to stand by powerless but to look idly on while the shrines and schools and convents, their historic and beloved holy places, were systematically desecrated and then alienated to a profane use by industry or commerce. For the army of occupation—in the name of 'Liberty', of course—drove the priests and the nuns away from the cloisters, colleges, and pilgrim centers; turned those hallowed halls into barracks for the troops and stables for their mounts; and in the end sold off the properties to highest-bidding business interests for store quarters or factory space—all to the fattening of French treasuries at Luxemburg's expense.

A peaceable nation (they boasted no army, they commanded no arms), the Luxemburgers were driven to rebel. "*Better that we fall in battle than witness the misery of our people and our holy places,*" reads the legend on the monument of Clervaux battleground from that brave, mad War of Clubs in 1799. Cudgels proved no match for muskets and the patriots were butchered where they stood, or thrown in prison at the capital and starved to death, or led out in chains and massed in the ditch of the Luxemburg fortress and there shot down in infamy like dogs.

Nor was the Emperor less cruel, to whom the Republicans gave way. For while Bonaparte's all-conquering arms swept in flying columns over Europe Luxemburg felt the lash that still was the mark of French rule: the stinging lash of war levies, confiscatory taxes, and universal conscription, to say nothing of Church-baiting practices such as drafting of seminarians and punitive deportation of *personae non gratae* among the priests.

2

Through those years the parents of Lewis Mathias lived while they were single. And now this son was born to their marriage—on June 18 1814 in the storied old Ardennes Forest at the village of Offagne, thirty-one miles from Arlon, in a part of Luxemburg peopled by Walloons, French-speaking Celts. They had been delivered from French domination by the Emperor's forced retreats of the year before; and the first birthday of this baby turned out to be the day of Waterloo, when the power of Napoleon was broken and scotched some seventy miles away. Luxemburg was then accorded the status of an independent grand duchy by the Congress of Vienna.

Yet the dove of peace hovering over the dukedom's church steeples and cottage roofs did not settle down to

rest and the years in which our Lewis grew to manhood were unhappy still. For the Grand Duke, that bitter Calvinist William of Orange, mauled his Catholic duchy with hard-fisted edicts the while as King of the Netherlands he was trouncing Catholic Belgium too. As if to supply the backdrop proper to the act, Luxemburg had become a scene of widespread famine in '17 and right afterward of pestilential disease and epidemic death. Then a fanfare, and the royal bigot, taking the field to wage war upon his subjects, came on stage with an army of tactical restrictive measures with which to lay a siege. First he fashioned engines to crush the people beneath a weight of taxation; then in a hot diversionary effort opened fire against their clergy; and finally having his vantage, poured volley after volley of repressive laws into the land. There were laws to balk popular festivals and time-honored social customs (by curbing public demonstrations and outlawing any celebration on a workday); laws placing the schools under government regulation (whereby ordinary operation of schools was rendered most difficult and some were ordered closed); laws transferring the seminary course of studies to the curriculum of state colleges (thus taking the education of priests out of the hands of the Church). An excellent concordat procured by Pope Leo XII failed to bring hoped-for relief: it was flouted and thoroughly dishonored and disowned by injunction and enactment of the Grand Duke.

It was in '29, when the boy Lewis was fifteen, that in sheer exasperation the countries of Luxemburg and Belgium drew up a joint petition which was presented to William of Orange bearing 300,000 signatures and demanding redress of the grievances cited. When the tyrant unwisely made reply the following year by a show of force, revolution broke out and Luxemburgers swarmed up on the run to fight at the side of the Belgians in defense of Brussels. Belgium declared its independence of Holland; Luxemburg issued a proclamation of union with Belgium. The Great Powers received Belgium's independence as a *fait accompli* and permitted the western half of Luxemburg to be incorporated as a Belgian possession; but they returned the other half of the Grand Duchy to the rule of the House of Orange-Nassau. Inasmuch as this restoration of the Orange prince's power was nevertheless not put into effect—and poor Luxemburg cut in two—until '39, for a decade all Luxemburgers as it happened lived together under Belgium's Constitution, relishing to the full its hard-won guarantees of the cardinal freedoms, sc., of worship, education, association, and the press.

And so for a moment of history little Luxemburg was paradise. Unquestionably its looks were the looks of a paradise fresh from the hand of Creation: the land lithe and lovely in its panoramic roll and lie, its hill heights dressed in forest green, its hollows silver-ribboned with streams. All about, cradled in the lowlands or cuddled on the slopes, there were towns and villages sending church spires skyward to pray over the people's clustered red-roofed homes and ring the Angelus bell out to the orchards and vineyards, to the oat fields, potato patches, and cow pastures, to the ends of the countryside. And on the ruggedest hilltops were seen everywhere those magnificent ruins of picturesque and stately old castles, the finest muster of them anywhere in Europe, that lent untold romantic charm and elfin grace to Lilliputian Luxemburg. The people's customs too seemed quaint. In the Mathias household at Offagne, as was common practice in the duchy, the delicacy served up on great feastdays was rabbit stew, but sugared plum-tarts on Sundays. It was a compact, idyllic nation, this Old Luxemburg close-woven in a single faith and in a community of folk memories and ways.

Now, however, doomsday was finally at hand and the menace of disunion loomed as large as universal death, for kinsmen were to be forever set apart. It was the end of the world they were awaiting in the sundering of their national ties—the end of that world which they had known and loved when hand in hand.

3

The year of Luxemburg's partition, 1839, Lewis Mathias then twenty-five took ship with his young bride

Clara Feck for the New World. In their company were: John Mathias, Lewis's eighteen-year old brother; John Feck, Clara's twenty-nine-year old brother; and Margaret Rudisch, the latter's wife. And in Warner, Beers & Co.'s *History of Seneca County* (1886) these five will all be found listed as early settlers there. No man can tell the splendor now of that rainbow they followed over the sea, but history draws a picture of a monstrous world of gloom rising to engulf them at the journey's end. For Asiatic cholera, a mysterious new disease which caused people to die like flies, had visited this Ohio county in '31 and the homesteaders lived in daily dread of its return. A drought had wiped out the grain crops in '38. The following year in May, just before the probable time of our group's arrival upon the darkening scene, a terrific hailstorm had shot down from the springtime sky and riddled all the green growing things in the planted clearings. Worst of all, however, America was in the viselike grip of hard times and a two-year old panic was paralyzing the country at the moment.

To get a foothold in a new country a man had to have land and Lewis Mathias wasted no time acquiring his piece of property. On August 29 1839 he purchased twenty-three acres (legally described as "part of the west part") in the northwest quarter of section twenty-three in Big Spring Township, the transaction involving $126—all of which is attested by a deed of record in Tiffin Courthouse.

Until recently the township had been territory belonging to the redskins. But in December of '32, after the Wyandot Indians surrendered their reservation at the Big Spring, this tract was offered for sale by proclamation of President Andrew Jackson and could be bought at the Land Office in Bucyrus for $1.25 an acre. Some German Catholic immigrants hailing from Baden had secured land patents for the Wolf's Creek area and founded the village of New Riegel. A slight two miles away to the southwest a pair of Luxemburgers named Nicholas Perl and Michael Wagner had procured original land grants for much of section twenty-two in Big Spring Township. Lewis Mathias, coming several years too late to buy public land and be recorded as a grantee of the United States, now took a derivative title to a plot adjoining the holdings of Nicholas Perl. And since John Mathias, John Feck, and a man by the name of Nicholas Goshe soon settled in this vicinity also, it began to be apparent that you had a Luxemburger settlement in the making here. But because Luxemburgers looked 'French' to the Germans, the infant community was commonly referred to as 'Frenchtown' by its neighbors—a name which stuck, strengthened by the mass influx of other fellow nationals happening later on.

As Lewis was a blacksmith by trade and only proposed to do part-time, small-scale farming, twenty-three acres fully satisfied his present requirements for land. Felling trees to make a clearing, out of these timbers he fashioned his log house and log workshop—on what is now County Highway 6, known locally as the Berwick Road. Almost forty years afterward when he had grown old there came a day, one of many such occasions, when his grandchildren had collected round to stare openmouthed at the roaring flame of the forge, and tingle to the bell-like clangings of the hammer on the anvil, and whoop with delight as showers of sparks went raining off the beaten white-hot metal of a horseshoe or a wheel-rim. On that special day they got to watch how he made 'coal', i.e., charcoal: watched the old man cast up a six-foot heap of tree bark and slash, then set the heap on fire and hold the flames stifled. When all this fun was at an end, before they went away they wandered up to the house as they usually did when there. To six-year old Rose Welter it seemed an ultra old-fashioned place. Not for being a log cabin—her home was a log cabin too—but by reason of the massive smoke-blackened fireplace and its long rail slung with steaming kettles and cauldrons.

But Lewis and his wife Clara were young at the time this land was young, when the country was still in the making. Life's pulse was energetic and its complexion sanguine then, though the times were hard and full of deprivation. In that primitive and trying era they missed the solace and the succor of Mass and Sacraments most of all. True, a small log church named for St. Boniface had been put up in 1833 at Wolf's Creek, the German

settlement. (And note that this was the first *completed* Catholic church in northwestern Ohio.) But from ecclesiastical records of the year '37 we learn that at that time there was scattered across the upper half of the state a sum total of exactly seven priests. So pathetically few and far between in that vast sector of America's frontier, these priests had to play the part of giants in their day: striding in seven-leagued boots up and down the land; grimly staring troubles out of countenance; and slain only awkwardly by adversity if ever slain at all. For they were called upon to ride horseback hundreds of miles a month, their vestments stuffed in the saddlebags—sloshing through mire on the lonely roads; padding along the windings of dim forest trails full of silence; fording rivers at the rapids (bridges there were none) ; reining up at some fresh outbreak of cholera or swamp fever and dismounting to confess the sick and bury the dead, with never a thought of saving their own skins. Like the frontiersmen they came to bless and comfort, the missionaries of those early days wore knit jackets, woolen stockings, and fur moccasins against the winter's cold and dined the whole year round on cornmeal and potatoes as the staples of their food.

Joseph MacNamee and Projectus Machebeuf, diocesan priests (the latter is immortalized in Willa Cather's historical novel *Death Comes For The Archbishop*), started working out of Tiffin as their center shortly after Lewis's land purchase in '39; and one or other of the two came to the Wolf's Creek church off and on; but neither of them was the first or even the usual priest-visitor there. That distinction belongs to a somewhat earlier pathfinder of the Faith Francis Xavier Tschenhens C.SS.R. who, speaking German, French, and English and going his great rounds from the Redemptorist center at Peru, made calls here at fairly regular intervals from '34 to '43. It was he who performed almost all the baptisms at St. Boniface's up to 1840, when the Redemptorists temporarily gave up their post at Peru. (That was the year they founded a town they named Toledo upon the new Miami & Erie Canal, to the north.) And that was the year the first child of Lewis Mathias and Clara Feck was born: a girl they gave the name of Clara, brought forth in the log cabin on May 4, baptized in the log church on May 18, the baptizing priest a Father Matthias Wuerz, the godfather her uncle John Feck.

Their next child was the girl Josephine. Born on November 5 in '41, she was christened the following January 9 by Father Tschenhens; and it was Josephine Goshe, soon to be a principal figure in our narrative, who stood as the godmother. But on February 3 in '43 at the birth of their third child, a boy called John, it appears that Mrs. Mathias died in labor (church records are wanting for this particular time). She was buried behind the present mausoleum in St. Boniface Cemetery with an iron cross to mark her grave.

This woman is a silent, brave, tragic figure in our family annals, though in history hers was but the ordinary short, pathetic life-story of many a pioneer American mother.

With three motherless babies on his hands, the widower re-married. It was Josephine Goshe (1818-1890) whom Lewis Mathias took to wife this time—on November 14 1843 at St. Mary's in Tiffin in the presence of Father MacNamee. Those there to witness the nuptials were: John Feck, Nicholas Pethe, and the bride's father Nicholas Goshe.

4

Never having had regular church services and of course never having dared to dream of possessing a resident priest, the devoted backwoodsmen of St. Boniface's at the coming of the Precious Blood Fathers into their midst in '44 were transported with joy. Francis de Sales Brunner C.PP.S., the American founder, had fixed on New Riegel for the cradle of his new community and the headquarters of his missionary band. Working beside the student-priests and brothers of the society, all that spring and summer the jubilant settlers felled trees and

squared logs and hauled the roughhewn timbers over to the chosen site in the clearing where a convent was to arise. And thanks be to God, it was up and dedicated to 'Our Lady at the Crib' in time for the festival observance of the Nativity of the Lord. Sweetly echoing into the depths of the dark and sleeping woods on Christmas Eve the convent bells called to the people to come to a solemn Midnight Mass. Gathering moist-eyed in front of a Christmas crib, afterwards the congregation sang the *Stille Nacht.* And then and there six newly arrived Precious Blood Sisters entered upon a perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament—which was to be kept up without a break at this altar for eighty-seven years (only discontinued in 1931). Following this brave and beautiful beginning the nuns opened a day school for girls, then organized a Sunday School class for the rest of the parish children. Imagine all this if you can—in a frontier land still covered with the virgin forest.

But the tang of a pioneer progress lay keen in that morning air. And gazing out over the landscape one could actually behold the broad face and leading features of it undergoing a marked change. To open this country up to commerce they were then laying the Mad River & Lake Erie Railway bed; and villages were springing up, like mushrooms, almost overnight along the right-of-way as the tracks and trains came on down state. Two miles southeast of New Riegel there was a new place called Berwick platted in '45. And by then the railroad had pushed on into Big Spring Township and was busy cutting a way through to the site now occupied by Adrian.

Bishop Purcell, visiting St. Boniface Parish in '46, bore the monstrance for the Corpus Christi procession-in-the-open, giving benediction from four bough-trimmed and flower-bedecked altars out in the fields and woods. This was to be the last of his visits, however; for the new diocese of Cleveland erected a year later took over the upper half of the state, relieving the Cincinnati bishop of that care. Since the New Riegel congregation had grown to a hundred and fifty families now and the old log church could not house such numbers, they replaced it with a more sizeable and imposing brick structure in '48. And there Amadeus Rappe, Cleveland's first bishop, ordained three seminarians to the priesthood for the Precious Blood Society in '49.

Meanwhile Josephine Goshe, stepmother of the three children of Lewis Mathias by Clara Feck, began bearing him children of her own, until there were six as follows: John Baptist born in '45, Catherine in '47, Nicholas in '49, Henry in '52, Anna in '54, and a stillborn baby in '58. Childbearing, however, only laid the foundations for future parental love and care; and there came dark days when parents had reason to tremble with a ghastly fear and fall to their knees in an agony of prayer. For cholera swooped down on the settlers' cabins in '48 and made off with as many as fifteen souls of the parish between August and October. In '52 it struck again —this time with a tornadolike and panicking fury, and in one month (August as it happened) twenty-seven fresh mounds sprang up to show where the victims lay in the little parish graveyard.

The Angel of Death passed the home of Lewis Mathias by. But his friend and former brother-in-law John Feck is numbered among those swept away. Mr. Feck (1810-1852) had five children: John and Joseph preceded him in death; Clara, Henry, and Catherine survived him. From the county histories we learn he was located in the Berwick area when he died; but in '44 and '45 at least, as courthouse records will serve to show, he was to be found not more than half a mile from the Mathias place on a sixty-acre tract in the eastern half of section twenty-two. Only forty-two, he was buried the day he died, on the seventeenth of that Month of Woe in 1852.

The Mathias household, with the necessary exception of members yet unborn, is found listed in the United States Census of 1850 (cf. microphotographic copy of this census record in Toledo Public Library). Assistant Marshall Crum making the enumeration committed some rather unimportant errors, in part the result of an effort to state ages as of the forthcoming birthdays. Lewis is written down as a farmer, with property valued at

$1,180; he and his wife, as born across the sea; the children, as native Ohioans; Clara, Josephine, and John, as in attendance at school that year.

Lewis lost his brother John by death in '54. Mr. John Mathias (1822-1854) had resided at his brother's while a bachelor and worked beside him in shop and field. But he married Victorine Guillaume in '49 and, purchasing two lots in Springville at that time (he bought another two years later on), went to live there. As an accomodation Lewis gave $225 in '53 for title to John's fourteen-acre plot in the northeast quarter of section twenty-two not far from the blacksmith shop. Victorine died in childbirth that year. John, following her to an early grave, passed away himself on January 6 1854 when only thirty-two; a headstone points to the place of his burial in St. Boniface Cemetery. There were three children thus left orphans at a tender age: Catherine (*m.* Michael Thom in '70); Mary (*m.* Maurice Kirian in '71); John Jr. (*m.* Margaret Lucius in '75). The Guillaumes took the two girls to raise. Lewis and his wife took John Jr. Whether or not ever legally adopted, the boy was in effect their son from that time on, even to the point of being received as a Lewis Mathias heir at the property settlement of '80.

But, one brother lost, Lewis gained another when Mr. John Nicholas Mathias (1819-1894) and his wife Mary Peter (1822-1900) arrived at the Frenchtown settlement in '54. Inasmuch as they had a four-year old son born in New York, apparently they had marked time in the East after touching the American shore. Now John Nicholas bought the Frenchtown farm on which he raised his family: a twenty-five acre clearing in the southeast quarter of section twenty-two over the road and half a mile west from Lewis's place. Eleven years later, in '65, he was to acquire (from Lewis) fourteen acres more in the northeast quarter of the same section and later still, in '70, eighty other acres that lay behind his farm in section twenty-seven. He was seventy-five years of age at death and is laid to rest under a monument in the Frenchtown Cemetery. His six descendants were: Dominic (*b.* 1850, *m.* Theresa Weber); Lewis (*b.* 1854, *m.* Margaret Goshe, niece of his aunt-by-marriage Mrs. Lewis Mathias *neé* Josephine Goshe); Joseph (*b.* 1856, *m.* Mary Louise Arend, daughter of his first cousin Clara Mathias by her first husband); Peter (*b.* 1859, no subsequent record); Catherine (*b.* 1861, *m.* John Peter, a second cousin on her mother's side); Henry (*d.* 1866 of unstated age). Dominic's first-born, a boy named John (*d.* 1896 at twenty-three) whom the grandfather brought up, is accounted yet another member of the household of John Nicholas.

5

By now—that is, by 1854—the countryside nicknamed Frenchtown was rather thickly peopled as farming communities then went. Pathfinders here had been Nicholas Perl and Michael Wagner in '33. Venturing in their footsteps had come Lewis Mathias accompanied by John Mathias and John Feek in '39. Thus opened up, the area saw a long tidal wave of immigration come washing across the Atlantic out of Old Luxemburg—the Belgian province and the Grand Duchy; and the wave had risen higher and higher for a decade and a half. The following is a sample list of representative surnames figuring prominently in this movement: Arend; Bakies; Calmes, Collett, Courtad; Feek; Goshe, Grine, Guillaume; Heinen, Huss; Kirian; Lafontaine, Limbach, Lucius; Mathias, Mangett; Nepper, Nick, Niederkohr; Perl, Peter, Pethe; Serin, Shumaker, Simonis; Thom, Tiell; Wagner, Warnement, Welter, Werling; Youngpeter. To say nothing of pronunciation, there came a change in the spelling of some of these names with their importation into America, the originals of Goshe, Mathias, and Warnement, three glaring examples, being: *Gauché, Matthis,* and *Varnimont.*

Although a Gallic and Teutonic jumble, these family designations nevertheless at the middle of the nineteenth century belonged to a border people who, despite having recently suffered political disunion, were still keenly conscious of their national kinship and solidarity—a people whose mother tongue was a German dialect yet whose sympathies by the weight of centuries-old tradition and long-standing custom lay more with France. They had now grown so numerous at Frenchtown Settlement that they felt a need for a clearer recognition of themselves as a distinct national group with a cultural importance all their own, while in the minds of Americans at large they were still being lumped benightedly with the Germans. Rank outsiders to that world of foreign manners practiced at the New Riegel church, they longed for a parish of their own now that their numbers warranted it. Did they but have a church standing as a symbol at the heart of the Luxemburger settlement, then theirs would be the feeling which was due them of at long last being 'at home' in the New World.

Bishop Rappe, himself a Frenchman, understood the sentiment at once and concurred unhesitatingly in existence of the need. And so it was that on April 4 in '56 the bishop acquired half an acre of Lewis Mathias as a site for the new church and got an adjoining half acre from Nicholas Perl for location of the parish house, the cost in each instance being a nominal five dollars. This composite block, divided by nothing more tangible than the survey section line, lay next to Lewis's home along the Berwick Road. That summer when the church edifice was under construction, provision was made for a cemetery across the way with purchase of four acres from Peter Courtad for $120. And the year was not yet out when the fine new brick St. Nicholas Church was up—on land that Lewis Mathias, his descendants are proud to remember, had furnished.

For their church-builder and first pastor the bishop had sent a French priest named Louis Molon to his beloved Luxemburgers. In the table of subscribers to the building fund drawn up by Father Molon are found: John Nicholas Mathias ($21), Lewis Mathias ($30), Nicholas Perl ($40), Peter Welter ($21), and other parishioners correspondingly generous. All able-bodied men of the congregation contributed days of work that amounted to an impressive grand total of man-hours gratis. Landholders in a position to do so culled choice trees from their remaining stands of virgin timber, Lewis Mathias being entered as the donor of two oaks and four birches. Then came special-purpose solicitations: for the windows and stoves, the pews and altars and organ, the patron saint's statue and a canopy and banners. And in conclusion it was agreed that families in prospering circumstances should furnish two cords of firewood to the church, poor families one cord.

Pastors appointed after Father Molon were: William Bally in '58, John Peter Dolweck in '60, Alphonse Laux C.PP.S. in '62, Nicholas Moes in '64, Andrew Magenhann in '65, John Buerkel in '69, Joseph Peter Golden in '71.

Living close by, Lewis Mathias could always be counted on by the priests to lend them a helping hand. It is related in the St. Nicholas Parish historical register that he gave the pastor a "cut" of wood and "plumes" for a featherbed in '64 and was paid for the repair of a door that year and for certain extensive work done inside the rectory the following year. Nor were the priests of the parish the sole beneficiaries of this trait of amiability on his part. For when the Mathias dwelling was being emptied by the marriages of sons and daughters, the aging Nicholas Goshe came to make his home and pass away his waning years with Lewis and Josephine, his son-in-law and daughter; and there in '72 the old man slept away at the age of eighty-three.

6

Something rarely vouchsafed to mankind was accorded to the populace of Frenchtown in Father Gloden's time: a sign from Heaven. Two years a priest when he came to them at the age of twenty-nine, Joseph P. Gloden

was a fellow Luxemburger who dreamed dreams such as they could understand. And he dreamed of the great Luxemburg Madonna as an immigrant crossing the seas as they had to America.

Over in the Grand Duchy, at the capital, in the new Cathedral of Notre Dame there was a wonder-working statuette of the Virgin and Child—so age-old an object of popular devotion in the nation's troubled past that Our Lady had been established as Patroness of Luxemburg under the title used to invoke her at this ancient shrine: 'Consoler of the Afflicted'. Never a true Luxemburger worthy of the name but preened and spread his feathers at mention of this miraculous image's great glory and renown. But what were the sons of the fatherland settled in the New World to do? To make their way overseas to the Old Country on frequent pilgrimages was out of the question. Might not the privilege be granted them, asked Father Gloden, of setting up a shrine to Our Lady of Consolation right here in their adopted land? In answer to this American petition Bishop Adamis back in the Grand Duchy, pleased at the thought of the nation's Marian devotion taking root across the ocean, had an excellent replica of the venerated statue prepared incorporating a relic of wood and cloth from the original. This was the likeness—a precious regal-gowned, scepter-bearing, crown-covered Mother of God holding the Son of God clad in like attire on her arm—which was brought reverently to Frenchtown under letters patent by the returing parishioners Francis Collett and Nicholas Warnement.

Designating the mission church in his charge at neighboring Carey as the site of the American shrine, Father Gloden issued an invitation to the people of St. Nicholas Parish and their friends to come and solemnly escort the celestial miniature in triumphal procession to its settled destination. And hundreds of ecstatic pilgrims assembled on the day appointed, May 24 1875. Alternating between the praying of rosaries and litanies and the singing of hymns to the music of a band, this fervent concourse started marching the seven long miles on foot from Frenchtown to Carey to see their beautiful Madonna ceremoniously enthroned. Twelve young women in white veils and white gowns took turns by fours upholding the dais on which rested the resplendent Queen of Heaven's figurine.

It was a day of days for Mr. Mathias toward the sunset of his years. With him were his wife, his sons, his daughters this day. Clara even had his grandchildren along: Mary and Josephine Arend; Catherine, Peter, Rose, and John Welter—John a babe in his father's arms; Rose a two-year old toddler holding onto her mother's hand or, wearied from the walking, raised up and breasted by the strong. Thus with all his loved ones gathered round him that pioneer immigrant and settler Lewis Mathias saw the ancient faith of his homeland come like a harbinger of better times for the land of his adoption, bearing a cornucopia of blessings to be poured out on the America that he and his comrades had shaped—saw it plain as day in that shining likeness of the Luxemburg Virgin as she went borne aloft in embroidered white damask robes to her new station accompanied by a retinue of enraptured devotees and clients, all Americans.

And in betrayal of the Blessed Mother's marked pleasure at this multitude's devotion in her honor something of a miracle took place that day. For they had got not quite halfway to Carey when a towering mass of black clouds, streaked with dazzling plays of forked lightning and tumbling and tossing to a ceaseless thunderous crash and roll, swept upon them out of the west. Full of faith which he imparted to the throng, Father Gloden shouted: "We're going on. The Virgin will not fail to protect us." Then the storm raced up on the wings of the wind and broke and raged against the countryside. But though there was rain streaming down round about the moving cortege, *never a drop wet the praying marchers.* Witnesses under oath have attested the phenomenon beheld that day and many formal depositions containing its description have been preserved for posterity. This marvel is an authenticated part of history now.

7

But if the glory of the Lord shone on the people in that historic scene, it was far from being first or sole tangible evidence of God's great goodness given to the blacksmith. For while his life had been a hard one, it had brought him happiness and satisfaction. His place in the community was an honored one, his work respected; both his marriages had proved to be models of harmony and fruitfulness; and he had a double family of progeny that, never a disappointment to a father's expectations among them, filled him with frank pride. And if all this were not enough to show that life had blessed him, he could have called you to look and see how his hands were filled and running over with earthly substance out of God's bounty; for increase of means had made him a propertied man.

Here is the complete abstract of the real estate purchased in Big Spring Township by Lewis Mathias:

1839: 23 acres (*pt w pt, nw* ¼, *sec* 23); $126. The original holding, where his home and shop. Half an acre cut off for church site in '56. Residue his during life, Josephine's at his death.

1850: 80 acres (*w* ½, *se* ¼, *sec* 15); $600. Held at death.

1853: 14 acres (*pt e* ½, *ne* ¼, *sec* 22); $225. This taken off his brother John's hands. Same sold in '65 to his brother John Nicholas for $588.

1855: 2 lots (*No.* 58 *and No.* 59, *New Riegel*); $60. Same sold in '71 for $200.

1857: 40 acres (*w* ½, *w* ½, *nw* ¼, *sec* 22); $925. Same sold (partially a gift) in '60 for $500 to his son-in-law Peter Arend.

1861: 29 acres (*w pt, e* ½, *se* ¼, *sec* 15); $870. Same at once re-sold in '61 for $870 (loaned) to his son-in-law Anthony Heinen.

1865: 47¼ acres (*pt, se* ¼, *sec* 22); $1975. Adjacent to John Nicholas's twenty-five acre farm. One and three-quarter acres sold off in '71 for $263 to his son John Baptist for a home. Remaining forty-five and one-half acres sold in '76 for $3640.

1869: 29 acres (*w pt, e* ½, *se* ¼, *sec* 15); $1500. Re-purchased of Anthony Heinen. Held at death.

1870: 29 acres (*pt, e* ½, *se* ¼, *sec* 15); $1450. Contiguous to the above. Held at death.

1871: 59.9 acres (*w pt, sw* ¼, *sec* 23); $3600. Same immediately re-sold in '71 for $3600 (loaned) to his newly married son Nicholas.

1876: 59.9 acres (*w pt, sw* ¼, *sec* 23); $5100. Re-purchased from Nicholas (to facilitate his plans). Held at death.

It was a mark of the man that he made good use of the means he had at his disposal. No one knows the number or the size now of the benefactions he made out of cash reserves; a few of his contributions to the Church are everything that is of record of that nature. But it can hardly be imagined he was any less charitable with money than with property. And so we may presume that, whether by gift or loan of which there is no extant notation, he dealt no less generously with his eldest son John, whom he had taught the blacksmith trade, than with the other sons and the daughters, for whom some disposition of property is known to have been made at the time they married. But if his charities with money are matters for conjecture, the good that he did with land he possessed reads like an open book:—bringing up a family of nine sons and daughters, eight of his own and one that was his brother's; cheering up and sustaining his wizened and failing father-in-law; making loans where loans were badly needed; buying and selling to accomodate the hopes and plans of others; furnishing a

site for the parish church; locating his sons and sons-in-law on farms or launching them in business; and as the final fruit of all his lifelong labors, accumulating an ample estate for his dependents when he died.

Unfortunately *there is no picture of him* in existence. But he always wore a beard; was of middle height and, for a blacksmith, decidedly spare and slight of build. Although he never bothered to learn the English language well, he was a lettered man. And in a firm, clear hand employing German script he signed his name as "Luis Matthis" to all official papers. Yet people plagued him constantly with their variations on the spelling of his name. Father MacNamee wrote him down as *Aloysius* in the marriage-register. And his surname turns up in the churchly archives and in legal documents and files with the forms: *Mattay, Mathai, Matthey, Mathei, Mathais, Mathews,* and *Matthew.* But the accepted English version of his full name, the one adopted unanimously by his descendants, is *Lewis Mathias.*

At length the day came for him to bid farewell to life. The Last Sacraments—Confession, Viaticum, Last Anointing—were administered by Father Gloden on the deathbed in the home. And the soul of Mr. Mathias departed this world on August 6 1878 when he was sixty-four. The following day the noble old homesteader was lowered into his grave in St. Nicholas Cemetery across the way. A tombstone shows where they laid him.

8

Since his death had forestalled endowment of Henry (married that same year) and of Anna (married in '79), his grief-stricken wife resolved to relinquish her prior and lifetime rights in the estate and let a settlement be made with all the heirs, three of them stepchildren of hers and one a nephew always treated like a son. Besides buildings, furniture, personal effects, and money in some unspecified sum there was a total of 220.4 acres of land in the estate. The widow reserved to herself the original tract of twenty-two and a half acres, on which the homestead and the shop stood. On April 1 1880 the rest was appraised and sold as follows:

Section 23:	59.9 acres,	at	$5,328.00
Section 15:	58 acres,	at	3,607.60
Section 15:	40 acres,	at	2,440.00
Section 15:	40 acres,	at	2,440.00

It was Henry who bought the parcel of 59.9 acres; J. Schirack, Chas. Thom, and A. W. Simonis were the purchasers of the other parcels. The proceeds of the land sales, $13,815.60, went to be divided among the following heirs: Mrs. Mathias, Clara Welter, Josephine Heinen, John Mathias, John Baptist Mathias, Catherine Mangett, Nicholas Mathias, Henry Mathias, Anna Shumaker, and J. Mathias Jr. Mrs. Mathias outlived her husband by eleven years, falling asleep in the Lord on February 15 1890 when not quite seventy-two.

The day after final disposition of the Lewis Mathias estate the good widow had arranged with Father Gloden for a funded Mass—the first such at St. Nicholas Church. It was to be an annual High Mass offered for and in memory of Lewis and Josephine Mathias, husband and wife, upon the feast of the Apostle St. Mathias (February 24) or, failing that, at sometime in the festal octave. The entry was entitled "For the Mathias Family" and the stipend paid was noted as $100. But because Father Gloden neglected to mark down a terminal year, his successors kept this pastoral obligation up until the Mass as it happened had run for thirty-one years, when finally Bishop Schrembs in 1911 formally decreed the covenant satisfied and thenceforward void.

II

(A) THE CHILDREN OF LEWIS MATHIAS AND CLARA FECK

Clara	*born*:	May.	4	1840	*died*:	Jul.	11	1910	*aged*:	70
Josephine		Nov.	5	1841		Aug.	8	1912		70
John		Feb.	3	1843		Dec.	31	1916		73

CLARA (1) MARRIED PETER AREND (1828-1862) on November 15 1859.

The two Arend children were: MARY LOUISE, 1860-1925, (*m.* Joseph Mathias; *ch.* Clara Magdalene, Nicholas Andrew, Lewis Andrew, Peter Thomas, Rose); JOSEPHINE ELIZABETH, 1862-1928, (*m.* John Niederkohr; *ch.* Salome, Charles, William, Harry, Verena, Ursula, Peter, Bertha, Lavina, Martha).

CLARA (2) MARRIED NICHOLAS WELTER (1825-1892) on April 17 1866.

The seven Welter children were: PETER, 1867-1867; CATHERINE, 1868-1893, (*m.* Frank Wagner; *ch.* Alfred); PETER, 1869-1947, (*m.* Mary Kirian; *ch.* Agnes, Evelyn, Clarence, Edward, Sylvester, William, Lorena); ROSE ELIZABETH, 1872-1947, (*m.* Matthew C. Clancy; *ch.* Marie, Luella, Matthew, James, Rose, John, Robert); JOHN BAPTIST, 1874-1943, (*m.* Bertha Warnement; *ch.* Pius, Leon, Reginald, Albert, Raymond, Mary, John, Leona, Margaret, Carl); MARY SUSAN, 1876- , (*m.* John Schultz; *ch.* Ralph); JOSEPHINE MATILDA, 1880- , (*m.* Frank Kirian; *ch.* Genevieve, Ethel, Andrew, Mary Ann, twin Cyril, twin Emil).

For Clara's life story see pp. 39-42.

JOSEPHINE MARRIED ANTHONY HEINEN (1834-1919) on October 16 1860. The marriage took place at St. Nicholas Church with Father Bally officiating and with Josephine's thirteen-year old half-sister Catherine the maid of honor. Mr. Heinen was a native of Reisdorf, Luxemburg. Between '61 and '69 he owned twenty-nine acres in section fifteen about half a mile northwest of the church. Thereafter the Heinen farm was to be found located in section twenty-one on the north side of the Berwick Road and nearly two miles due west of the church.

The eleven Heinen children were: CLARA, *b.* 1861, *m.* Peter Tiell; JOHN, *b.* 1862, *d.* 1865; JOSEPHINE, *b.* 1864, *m.* Henry Lucius; MARY ROSE, *b.* 1866, *m.* Ignatius Weber; CATHERINE, *b.* 1868, *m.* Jacob Koeckley; NICHOLAS, *b.* 1869, *d.* 1870; JOHN BAPTIST, *b.* 1870, *d.* 1870; MARGARET, *b.* 1872, *m.* John Kirian; MARY ANN, *b.* 1876, *m.* Anthony Klopp; ELIZABETH, *b.* 1877, *m.* John Albert Boos; JOSEPHINE MATILDA, *b.* 1880, *m.* Nicholas Collett.

Mrs. Heinen died in Carey; was buried in Frenchtown.

JOHN MARRIED ROSELLA GUILLAME (1849-1896) on August 3 1864. The wedding ceremony was performed before Father Moes in St. Nicholas Church; the best man was John's half-brother John Baptist, the maid of honor his first cousin Clara Feck. John had been trained as a blacksmith by his father and, like his father, did some farming while working at the trade. He is listed in '68 as owner of sixty acres in the northwest quarter of section twenty-eight about half a mile northeast of Springville. But in '72 he bought eighty acres on the north side of the Berwick Road where, at a point about a mile and a half west of the Frenchtown church, you came to a long lane leading to his home. Interestingly enough, all three of the households claiming descent from Lewis Mathias's first wife were neighbors there then: the Heinens dwelling west and the Welters east of John Mathias, one farm intervening between them and him in either case. Later he acquired some acreage south of the road bordering on fields that belonged to the Welters there. John was a public-spirited citizen giving generously of his time and

talents in community service. As early as 1886 you will find the Warner-Beers *History of Seneca County* acclaiming him for having been many years a parish councilman, nine years clerk of the school board, four years a township trustee. Old parish census records indicate that the two Catholic periodicals *Extension* and *The Messenger* were reading matter in his home. His wife expiring in '96 at the early age of forty-seven, he found himself left with eight motherless adolescent boys and girls ranging in age from thirteen to twenty-one. But he never remarried.

The twelve Mathias children were: CLARA ELIZABETH, *b.* 1865, *m.* Peter Wagner; ANTHONY JOHN, *b.* 1866, *m.* Louise Schlachter; NICHOLAS, *b.* 1868, *m.* Magdalene Wank; CATHERINE, *b.* 1871, *d.* at eleven months; twin ADAM, *b.* 1872, *d.* at five years; twin ELIZABETH, *b.* 1872, *m.* Henry Nye; MICHAEL LEWIS, *b.* 1875, *d.* at three years; ANNA THERESA, *b.* 1877, *m.* John S. Fox; JOSEPH PETER, *b.* 1878, *m.* Theresa Simonis; ALBERT MARTIN, *b.* 1880, *m.* Margaret Reinhart; JOSEPHINE VERONICA, *b.* 1883, *m.* John Perro; THEODORE WILLIAM, *b.* 1886, *d.* at one year.

The corporal remains of John Mathias, eldest son of the Frenchtown founder Lewis Mathias, repose in the Frenchtown cemetery.

(B) THE CHILDREN OF LEWIS MATHIAS AND JOSEPHINE GOSHE

JOHN BAPTIST, *b.* 1845, *m.* Marguerite Kirch. A tract of one and three-fourths acres intended as the premises for a home was provided for him by his father in '71 next to the John Nicholas Mathias farm. But about two years later he chose to sell this piece instead to Dominic Mathias and moved to Tiffin, where he operated a lumberyard. We also find him engaged in various real estate transactions from time to time both in Tiffin and New Riegel.

CATHERINE, *b.* 1847, *m.* John Baptist Mangett.

NICHOLAS, *b.* 1849, *m.* Margaret Nepper. Settled by provision of his father in '71 on a farm of approximately sixty acres across the road from the smithy, in '76 he deeded this land back to his father and, buying some lots in New Riegel from his brother John Baptist, opened up a grocery-and-bar business there. In later life he moved to Fostoria.

HENRY, *b.* 1852, *m.* Catherine Schlachter. At settlement of the estate in '80 he came into possession of the above-mentioned sixty-acre farm across the road from his mother's place.

ANNA, *b.* 1854, *m.* John Shumaker. Her name changed to Nepper by a subsequent marriage, she moved to Memphis, Tennessee, with her second husband.

III

NICHOLAS WELTER: 1825 – 1892

BEFORT in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg was his place of origin. The date of birth was September 15 1825. His parents, Joseph and Anna Marie Welter, ran a bakery-and-meat shop in town but also possessed five acres of outlying farm land. Nicholas was their fifth child.

A peaceful and secluded village, Befort is perched like an eagle's aerie on a lofty eminence that soars 1195 ft. above sea level at the plateau rim of the Sûre River valley not far from the German border. For centuries the place has had an enviable name for a rich, rare flavor and bouquet in its cherry and black currant brandies. It has old houses standing out of perpendicular and its streets sometimes are flights of stairs. Commonly enough in the daytime only the ancients, the infants, and the crippled or unwell remain in the village, since the able-bodied of both sexes have work cut out for them down in the fields.

The touch of the hallowing hand of time has graced the village church, with its tomb of Bernard of Befort harking back to 1558. But the stumbling butt of that hand has left its bruising print on the castle, there being only the castle's splendid and gigantic ruins to stand guard over the valley to the south. Yet in the whole picturesque Grand Duchy—a land strewn as the fairylands are in folk tales and nursery rhymes with lordly and stirring and mysterious old castles—there is nothing else quite like the loveliness-in-ruins of Befort Castle, its charming slender towers and graceful tall mullioned windows handed down proudly from Renaissance times. The Lords of Befort belonged to the high nobility of Lotharingia. They strut onto the stage of Luxemburg's history in the thirteenth century; they make their exit when Philip d'Orley is beheaded in 1593 for opposing Spain, and the castle then passes from their hands. Among later worthies honored to possess it were the Spanish Governor of Luxemburg Count Mansfeld and that colorful field marshall of the Thirty Years War Jean Beck. But in 1817, a mere eight years prior to the birth there in the village of Nicholas Welter, the Count of Liederkerke sad to say had the main tower pulled down to get materials for the building of a mill and sold the stone he had left over. A chateau erected by Marshall Beck stands intact beside the castle, unscathed by the vandal wrecking bar and wedge.

The big ruined castle, the tall church spire, the quaint homes and sloping fields of Befort overlook a mysterious and delightful valley called the Hallerbach, one of Europe's natural curiosities: a fantastic jumble of rock formations, cliffs, gorges, waterfalls, and caverns; dressed out in a lush vegetation; penetrable only on foot. Locally they style it 'Little Switzerland'. Not that there are any alps there but that the elevations are surprisingly abrupt, the passes deep cut, the cascades uproarious; and strange at it may seem, you do find all the majesty of mountain masses here in miniature. Beyond the wild beauty of this tumbling valley there lies a calmer earth of forests and pastures and of wheat fields and vineyards that fills out the remainder of the eight and a half miles from Befort on over to Echternach—a place where fifteen thousand people, among them the villagers of Befort, will gather to St. Willibrord's festival come Whit-Tuesday.

Oldest town in the Duchy is this Echternach on the Sûre: its yesterdays in evidence in immemorial Celtic stone carvings and Druid groves, in storied Roman roads and camps. Once upon a time life was lived there, as history reveals, not just to the beat of the marching feet of Rome's legions but under the awesome gaze of the

Caesars present in person. For Rome's Emperors held court and administered the world's affairs twelve miles east on the Moselle at Treves as calmly and majestically as on the Tiber.

In the reign of Tiberius III the sainted Willibrord came from Treves to be Luxemburg's Apostle. The great Benedictine Abbey of Echternach founded by this holy man in 698, a century before the day of Charlemagne, shone as a lamp to the Dark Ages. And though it was a house of labor and prayer, rulers delighted to endow it with estates, until many towns and villages were found concentrated under the benevolent sway of the Echternach abbots. About a fourth of the town's expanse consisted of the spacious Benedictine grounds, which over and above the abbey buildings proper contained St. Willibrord's Basilica and were laid out much like a park, having playing fountains, stately statues, and a pavilion scattered about among the beeches and orange trees.

Thirty-one years before Nicholas Welter's birth in near-by Befort this famous old abbey went down to destruction, its power swept away when the sacrilegious revolutionary French invaders in 1794 cast forth the great saint's bones, drove the monks out and, having turned the abbey into a hospital, a barracks, and a stable, sold the basilica to an earthenware manufacturer—and the fellow played havoc with the beauty of the hallowed edifice by setting up furnaces in it. An indignant Luxemburg achieved the basilica's restoration through the people's gifts and the government's grants. The abbey, however, became public property and there are housed under its roofs now a girls' grade school, a high school, a police station, and an electric light plant.

Sadly gathering up the saint's remains again, the people devoutly deposited them under the high altar of St. Peter's, the parish church of Echternach standing on a rock where a Christian house of worship has stood from the beginning of Christian times, long before Willibrord and the conversion of the nation. During Nicholas Welter's youth it was here at the flight of sixty steps from street to church that the famed sacred dancing procession drew to a halt—that curious and reverent dance in the streets time-honored on Whit-Tuesday in Echternach.

You may be sure the town was decked out gaily for the occasion: with flowerpots on rug-draped window sills; with streamers and flags afloat. Over the way on the German side of the Sûre a vast multitude in orderly ranks waited for the ringing of St. Peter's steeple bell. Then, with a band to strike up the music of an ancient processional chant and with choirs to voice its melody, the dance in honor of St. Willibrord got under way on the bridge: five steps forward, three steps back, in slow and sedately swaying motion. Six hours then went by before the tired marchers broke step and streamed up the stairs into the parish church to kneel down in prayer there before the Luxemburg Apostle's tomb. Upon leaving, some of them may have crossed the street to St. Willibrord Hospice—after the Paris Hôtel Dieu the most ancient house of the kind in Europe—which has been an old men's home for a thousand and two hundred years. But after the sustained exertion of that monumental dancing prayer most people would look for some light-hearted leisure and moments of fun; this they knew was awaiting them at the street fair's diverting stalls.

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2

The Befort Welters attended this festival in the good years and the bad. And it was surely a bad year for them when the Old Luxemburg they loved was split in two, half of it passing over to the possession of Belgium and the mangled remnant made a grand duchy. It was then 1839 and Nicholas was fourteen. And that was when two of his older brothers Joseph and John (birth years not recorded) went off to America—and are lost sight of save for notice of Joseph being a Chicagoan.

Fertile unrest shook the Duchy. Calvinist Grand Duke William's bad blood towards his Catholic dukedom was to prove a tough devil to scotch. But freedom from political terrorism did become the people's finally when they wrung a constitution on the Belgian model from their royal despot in '41. And deliverance from economic isolation became theirs with Luxemburg's entry into the Zollverein (Customs Union) of the Germanic states in '42. The rest of Europe, however, was still red-hot with revolutionary sentiment, and the pot about to boil over again, when the next three Welters—Peter, Catherine, and Nicholas—said tearful good-byes and quit their home for a foreign land. Behind them in Befort they left brothers and sisters still of tender age. One of these was Anna, ten years younger than Nicholas, who in time is found married to a Monsieur Michel Lorentz, owner of a café-pastisserie, Rue de la Gare in Echternach.

Welter is a very common name in the Grand Duchy. And a long while after 1847, the year Nicholas, Catherine, and Peter arrived in the capital at the start of their journey to the New World, there was a physician by that name who gained national prominence as founder of the Luxemburg Socialist Party, speaker of the chamber, and cabinet minister. That is why in Luxemburg City's new quarter today—where one comes upon streets named for Schiller and Heine and Goethe the poets, Lessing the dramatist, Virchow the scientist, and a group of patriots—there is also a Rue Michel Welter in his honor. It is a city of unusual beauty and our travellers of a century ago must have been delighted with its groves and rose gardens, its grand buildings and far-flung bridges, its plateaus, precipices, and swift-rivered ravines. Doubtless they gazed with unutterable awe at mighty Luxemburg Fortress, most redoubtable inland stronghold in Europe, which figured in more wars than any other from Gibraltar to Belgrade—held in turn by the Burgundians, the Spanish, the French; right then garrisoned by the Prussians. Anyhow, there can be scarcely any doubt that they went to ask a *bon voyage*, their lips tremulous with heartfelt prayer, at the ancient shrine of Our Lady Consoler-of-the-Afflicted in what then was the Jesuit Church of St. Nicholas (later the Cathedral of Notre Dame).

By now steamships plied the Atlantic Ocean; but such a novel, swift, expensive means of transportation was not for them. They came over on one of the old sailing vessels; and their canvas was spread to the wind for forty days to make the port of New York. Besides the Welters—Nicholas, now twenty-two, and his two-year older brother Peter and sister Catherine—the other Luxemburgers known to be aboard were the weaver John Grine and his wife Margaret with their four children, the eldest a girl named Catherine. Scarcely could thirteen-year old Catherine Grine have dreamed that one day she would be Peter Welter's bride. It was the hard reality of the moment, not musings on some nebulous future, which preoccupied the party then. How the others, departed from New York City—by horseback or stagecoach, by steamboat or rail—is not related; but Nicholas going it alone trudged his way out to Ohio and down to Frenchtown, lugging a green flowered carpetbag and glad of a ride if he got it on a westbound vehicle of any kind: a hitchhiking pioneer.

Peter Welter (1823-1907) settled half a mile south of Berwick, while the Grines went on to the vicinity of Adrian, where the mother met an untimely death in '49. Four years later—on November 22 1853 by Father Maximilian Homburger C.PP.S. in the New Riegel church—Peter was wed to Catherine Grine (1833-1913), then a young woman of twenty. The seven children born to their union were: John (*b.* 1856, *m.* Rose Schlachter); Nicholas (*b.* 1857, *d.* in infancy); Matthew (*b.* 1859, *m.* Sarah Werling); Catherine (*b.* 1860, *m.* Jacob Lafontaine); twin Anna (*b.* 1862, *m.* George Reinhart); twin Nicholas (*b.* 1862, *m.* Josephine Reinhart); Mary Elizabeth (*b.* 1867, *m.* Joseph Werling). Peter Welter passed away at the goodly age of eight-four on February 1 1907; his burial place in the Frenchtown cemetery exhibits a stone marker.

Catherine Welter (1823-1888) in less than a year after the nuptials of her brother Peter espoused the widower

Adam Simonis (1809-1879), a Bavarian thirteen years her senior. The ceremony occurred before Father John Van den Broek C.PP.S. in the New Riegel church on October 3 1854. Made stepmother of Adam's children by Catherine Effert, she then bore him nine of her own: Nicholas, 1855; Lewis, 1856; Valentina, 1857; Henry, 1859; Margaret, 1860; Mary Catherine, 1862; Francis Xavier, 1865; John George, 1868; Joseph, 1870. The Simonis farm lay nearly a mile west of St. Nicholas Church in Frenchtown on the south side of the Berwick Road. Mrs. Simonis's birthday was December 20; though she and her brother Peter (his birthday is buried in the waters of oblivion) had been born in the same year, evidently they were not twins. Death came to her at sixty-four on July 31 1888; she rests underneath a monolith in the Frenchtown cemetery.

3

For eighteen long years after his arrival in America Nicholas Welter stayed unmarried. (Happily, *a picture of him as a bachelor exists.*) While he reported at Adrian to work as a section man on the new roadbed of the Mad River & Lake Erie, that pioneer rail, he put up at a boardingplace in Berwick several miles away from there. His landlady remained perpetually surprised at his kindness in rising early every morning to bring in her firewood. Customarily he spent Sunday out at his brother Peter's farmhouse as he was never one to court the ladies. In fact he firmly intended, so he stated, to remain single through life—until once a hard siege of illness made him begin to doubt if that was a real wise course to pursue. Even so, he gave every appearance of being a man in no particular hurry to change his mind and take a wife.

And it was a masculine attachment which eventually forced his hand. He was bosom friend to one Peter Arend, who owned the farm across the road from the Simonises; and in the year of 1862 when Mr. Arend lay at death's door and in a last gasping breath begged him, "Take care. . . .Clara. . . .my children!" Nicholas made the dying man a solemn promise—and kept it to the letter. Yet only after an interval of four years full of the true regard he had vowed for Mrs Arend and her two baby girls did he bow to the logic of marriage under the circumstances and ask the widow for her hand—which unhesitatingly she gave to this strange, good man.

Thus none of our three Welters entered marriage at a youthful age, Peter and Catherine having been thirty and Nicholas now being forty when the nuptial vows were spoken. Moreover, Catherine and Nicholas had accepted a widower and a widow respectively and each undertaken care of stepchildren.

The wedding of Nicholas Welter and Clara Arend (*neé* Mathias) was celebrated in St. Nicholas Church on April 17 1866 before Father Nicholas Moes with John Mangett and Peter Simonis as groomsmen and Clara and Catherine Feck as ladies in waiting on the bride. The bridegroom, now about nineteen years in America, was fourteen years older than his bride and she soon to turn twenty-six. They spread the wedding feast in the bride's home and Peter's wife Catherine was chief cook for the grand occasion.

Resigning his railroad job, the new husband farmed the forty acres which his wife had come into by death of her former spouse. Their house was a log cabin which later was weatherboarded. It was here that Clara bore Nicholas the seven children of her second marriage. There was a log smokehouse but Nicholas later built a brick one; and it he who reared the barn. To better the farm's size and its yield he bought forty acres more (legal description: *e* ½ *n* ½, *se* ¼, *sec* 21) cater-cornered across Berwick Road to the west of the old one-room schoolhouse; and he rented out the house that stood on the new property. There were about five acres of woods on each forty-acre plot and the rest lay in pasture or was kept under cultivation. Seeing that he had been a railroader for the better part of his life, there is something a little remarkable about finding him now successfully farming eighty acres of land.

4

Honest as the day is long, they say, he was never one to rest easy while any obligation of his was running on unsatisfied. And once when it was impossible that a balance outstanding on a friendly advance be paid at source (the money was owed to someone in Luxemburg who died leaving no heirs), he considered the sum to belong to charity. On that score he arranged to make an extraordinary gift toward the decoration of the new St. Nicholas Church when the original Frenchtown church entered the limbo of things past in '87. This gift (it still hangs there) was a large oil painting of good St. Nicholas the parish patron, his namesake.

There are other things too that indicate how he gained his name for being a highly benevolent and chivalric soul. In the parish historical register one finds mention periodically of volunteer work on the church properties performed by him. Better still is the news that he not only never turned a beggar from his door but, in grateful remembrance of kindnesses done him when he himself had shuffled up the dusty road to Frenchtown afoot, gave a hearty welcome to all itinerants: a welcome that included a bed for the night for the stranger in his home. One would expect a man like that to be the intimate and pal of little children and—yes, Nicholas even rode his younger ones to school pickaback by turns.

In appearance he was a man of average stature who wore a flowing beard in after years; and you would have noticed especially the singular limpid beauty of his eyes and the winsome wave in his hair. The hair, which he let grow a little long, was at all times kept neatly combed. Possessing a good voice, he sang the hymns and folksongs of the land of his birth in enviable fashion. He had mastered English but conversed in it, naturally, with a distinct accent. He could read and could write. Mornings he would walk to church for Mass, carrying a thumb-worn prized old prayerbook. Evenings he would pore over the weekly papers that arrived from Europe. They were *Stimme der Wahrheit* (Voice of the Truth), *Das Luxemburger Wort* (The Luxemburger Report), and *Wiesenfreunde* (Friends of the Fields).

Save for these publications almost all of his ties with the Old World were broken by the time he came to the decline of life. But he did keep up a diligent correspondence in his late years with his sister Anna Lorentz: about the trend of events in Luxemburg, about the fortunes of old Befort friends and acquaintances, but especially about the doings and prospects of two of her sons: one named Lawrence who became a Redemptorist priest and afterwards went off to the South American missions; the other named Michael who, as we shall see, accepted his uncle's invitation to come and pay a visit to America.

In his old age Nicholas was always cold once winter set in, and he used to sit by the stove hardly bearing to leave its warmth. Coughing incessantly, he kept greasing his chest for relief of his "cold". His appetite failing him, he wanted nothing more than sage tea boiled with milk. Yet he insisted on still doing his chores. And the very last thing he did before taking to his deathbed was to bring an arm-load of wood into the house. Then over a period of two weeks he lay dying by degrees. A day or two before the end set in he had his sons and daughters all assemble in his presence for a last farewell; and he urged them not to forget to offer repeated prayers for their father's soul. Fortified by Extreme Unction and Viaticum given him by Father Matthias Arnoldi, Nicholas Welter passed to his eternal reward on June 14 1892 at the age of sixty-six, his death caused by what people called 'lung fever'. And on the 16th they buried him in St. Nicholas Cemetery there at Frenchtown, where there is a tombstone at his grave.

NICHOLAS WELTER
1825-1892

PETER WELTER
1823-1907

CATHERINE WELTER
1823-1888

ANNA WELTER
1835- ?

NEW RIEGEL LOG CONVENT
1844

FATHER BRUNNER, C.PP.S.
1795-1859

CLARA MATHIAS
1840-1910

JOSEPHINE MATHIAS
1841-1912

JOHN MATHIAS
1843-1916

IV

CLARA MATHIAS: 1840 – 1910

SHE WAS ONE of the pioneer native children in that part of Ohio. Born on a clearing near Wolf's Creek on May 4 1840 in the area later named Frenchtown, she was the eldest of the three children given the blacksmith Lewis Mathias by his first wife Clara Feck. Still not three years old when her mother died, she always maintained afterwards she remembered clearly "seeing her there in a white cap" laid out for burial. No ground exists for thinking the child was ever ill used by Josephine Goshe, the second Mrs. Mathias. But the early settlers' lot was a hard one and of course the young shared in it. She being the oldest of the children, Clara bore the major part of the household burden and was charged especially with the constant care of all the others: not only her own sister and brother Josephine and John but those five children too to whom the stepmother in due time gave birth. For this reason particularly she got scarcely any schooling in her youth: there is no indication she ever spent more than six weeks at Wolf's Creek in class. In all probability this was the school attendance alluded to in the registration for the U. S. Census of 1850 when she was about the age of ten. Yet she did somehow learn to read and at least could write her name.

Throughout her girlhood it seems she was more or less the cabin's drudge; for while her father and her uncle John were busy shoeing horses in the shop near by and her foster mother was as often as not out working in the fields, usually there was need for Clara, as she kept close eye on the babies in the house, to tend a row of pots cooking on the hearth and at the regular times dish up the meals. She was eight years old and going to the Sunday School conducted by the nuns of the convent at Wolf's Creek, where a brick St. Boniface Church was rising to replace the historic old log structure, when the first outbreak of cholera came upon the countryside and caused consternation and bewilderment to young as well as old. Then when our lass was twelve, there came a second, much more virulent epidemic in which her godfather-uncle John Feck perished. At fourteen she was racked with still crueler pangs of sorrow at the passing of her much-loved uncle John Mathias, who had dwelt in her father's house and had no little hand in raising her from an infant to a girl of nine. It was of some solace to her in this grief to see that they had brought his baby John Junior home for her to mother. And of further comfort was the advent that same year of John Nicholas Mathias, a new uncle of hers who settled in Frenchtown with his family just half a mile down the road.

2

Many another family entered the township from Luxemburg too at this flood tide of the settlers' immigration. Looking upon the sea of fresh faces, Clara was all agog at prospects of getting acquainted with so many strangers come lately to be her friends and neighbors. The primitive wilderness in the depths of which her birth had taken place was dissolving into nothingness before her very eyes, even as night mists and sleepers' dreams steal off at the dawn. There she stood as witness in the fullness of her youth while, with a sunshine of progress pouring down from their cloudless sky, they laid the cornerstone for one of the myriad settlements destined to make America great.

When the settlement church went up, on her father's former property and right next to his house, she was sixteen—and one was then a woman at sixteen.

Among the newcomers of '57 were the middle-aged couple from Belgian Luxemburg Peter Arend and his wife Mary Devillé with sons who were grown men. And it was with Peter Arend Jr. (1828-1862) rather than with any of the now fairly plentiful crop of immature swains in the settlement that the marriageable Miss Mathias thereupon proceeded to fall in love. Their nuptials took place in the Frenchtown church on November 15 1859, Father William Bally performing the service and Clara's sister Josephine and the Mathiases' friend and neighbor young Nicholas Perl standing as maid of honor and best man. Peter, who had been born on November 26 in '28, was now pretty nearly thirty-one while his native-born bride was merely nineteen.

The newly wed couple settled down on a forty-acre tract (legally described as: *w* ½ *w* ½, *nw* ¼, *sec* 22) which was bounded by County Road 45 on the west and by Berwick Road on the south, where the farm fronted. Conveying the land, there is a warranty deed of May 28 1860 informing us it was sold by Lewis and Josephine Mathias to their son-in-law Peter Arend for a consideration of $500. Inasmuch as the blacksmith had paid $925 just three years before for this same acreage, it is apparent the transaction involved a gratuity representing a dowry. With an eye cocked to the value of Johnny Appleseed's historic plantings, Mr. Mathias makes a clear stipulation in the instrument that there are to be reserved "to his own use the field in which the orchard stands and a road to said field, with the use of the orchard in his lifetime"—rights which were only to be extinguished eighteen years later.

Here Peter Arend, using logs he had at hand, built the home where Clara was to live out her days just a mile from the cabin where she was born. How well he worked may be judged from the history of this house which, picked up and moved to Adrian, stands there today just west of the elevator remodeled and a frame room added. A master cabinetmaker too, Mr. Arend also fashioned the great wardrobe which is one of the pieces of furniture that all of Clara's children prized and recalled with pleasure through the years. But despite all he did and all he had to do, no man observed rest on the Lord's Day with more scruple; and he would never so much as pluck a cabbage worm off the leaf even on a holyday obligation. His first daughter was born on August 29 in '60 and was named Mary Louise for both his mother and his wife's father. Probably he had the house up by then. And that being so, he must have had brave plans to talk about for the future with his very good friend Nick Welter. But—man proposes, God disposes—it was not given him ever to see his second daughter. At the close of summer in '62, only the third year of the marriage and his wife with child again, the poor man suddenly sickened and died. His baby born on October 9 following was christened Josephine Elizabeth for the godmother Mrs. Heinen, Clara's sister.

3

So there was young Mrs. Arend at twenty-two: a widow with a couple of small children. Somehow she managed to keep the farm in operation with assistance from her father and from her brother and half-brothers, not to mention Mr. Welter's endless interest and support. But she led too weary, worried, and lonely a life. Often at twilight when the day's work was done, setting a lamp in the window, she left her babies by themselves and, a shawl thrown on her shoulders, went out to chop wood in the gathered gloom. Things like that leave scars of memory which a woman carries with her to her dying day.

But once she married Nicholas Welter on April 17 1866, life became a satisfying, full, and rich experience.

For he was a devoted husband; and he loved his two stepdaughters as dearly as their mother did. His own first child by Clara only lived ten days. But the years God granted them together gave them six other sons and daughters who survived: Catherine; Peter; Rose; John; Susan; and Matilda. Between John's and Susan's births Mrs. Welter was an eyewitness to that highly mysterious rainfall about the statue and procession of Our Lady of Consolation. Before Matilda's birth she saw her father, the heroic old homesteader Lewis Mathias, die—and a springtime of history thus draw to its close. A little later when riding a mower pulled by a skittish horse, she lost her balance and plunged headlong into the path of the whirring blade. In a twinkling she was mutilated and disfigured for life, the place a shambles of mangled flesh and dripping blood. Poor Clara! The fore half of the right foot had been sheared off, the thumb and forefinger of right hand slashed away, index finger crunched and forever after crippled. Sensitive of her appearance, for the balance of her life she wore a shoe half stuffed with cotton and, when a full-length picture of her was being taken, covered up the bad hand with the good.

In '81, since they had liquidated her father's estate the year before and she had means at her disposal, she settled $800 apiece on Mary and Josephine in exchange for quitclaims from them to their interest in the forty acres of Peter Arend, their father. And in '82 she had the happiness of beholding Mrs. Josephine Mathias and Mr. John Nicholas Mathias, widow and brother of her father, chosen to be sponsors at the blessing of a new set of bells for the parish church.

Mr. Welter's death and the start of her second widowhood came on June 14 in '92 as she was entering her fifty-third year. About one year later her daughter Catherine, wife of Frank X. Wagner and mother of a newborn baby, met a premature death. Mrs. Welter took the infant grandson to raise, only to see the child die too after six more weeks went by. To Michael Lorentz she had offered her home and hospitality when he arrived from Echternach unaware of his uncle's death and burial; and lodging there on weekends, he worked at the meat-cutter's trade in Tiffin until he went back to the Old Country in '95. Meanwhile, the widow's farmlands did not lie fallow with Nicholas gone. Her son Peter and after that her son John when they married, in '94 and '00 respectively, established residence in the house on the other forty acres and farmed both places for their mother; and when Matilda her youngest, who had married Frank Kirian in '99, occupied the other house in turn it was Mr. Kirian who did the farming.

4

After that, Clara dwelt alone with the crowding memories of her checkered and fruitful past. She remembered being the 'little mother' in her father's log cabin and a frontiersman's elder daughter in the new settlement; being married twice and widowed twice; bringing forth nine sons and daughters all told. She recalled having had each of her babies christened in honor of one godparent if not both: the Arends—Mary Louise for Grandmother Mary Arend and Grandfather Lewis Mathias; Josephine Elizabeth for Aunt Josephine Heinen: the Welters—both Peters for Uncle Peter Welter; Catherine for Aunt Catherine Simonis; Rose Elizabeth for Aunt Rose Mathias; John Baptist for (half-) Uncle John Baptist Mathias; Mary Susan for half-sister Mary L. Arend; Josephine for half-sister Josephine E. Arend. And she looked back on taking the part of a godmother four times over herself: in '62 for Clara Arend, niece of her lately deceased first husband; in '65 for Clara Elizabeth Mathias, child of her brother John; in '68 for John George Simonis, her sister-in-law Catherine's son; and in '81 for Clara Magdalene Mathias, first child of her own first child Mary Louise.

She was prepossessing in appearance: a trifle taller than average, with brown eyes, and hair that always stayed jet black. She rarely ever missed going to daily Mass in the waning years of her life, saying this was but right, seeing she had leisure. And she used to keep the weeds cut down on one shoulder of the road so as to enable her to go the mile to church on foot. But sometimes when it rained or snowed, she would hitch a horse to the spring wagon and ride instead. As Christmas came on in '09 she had a paralytic stroke. And though she got so she could walk again with the help of a cane, a second stroke arrived to render her bedfast the following April. They took her over to Peter's place ~~north~~ east of Tiffin and there death claimed her at seventy years of age on July 11 1910. Father Waechter consigned her body to the earth in the graveyard at Frenchtown just over the road from the place where she had been born out of the mother-womb of a historic past. A monument is erected upon the burial site.

NICHOLAS WELTER
1825-1892

CLARA MATHIAS AREND WELTER
1840-1910

CATHERINE WELTER
1868-1893

PETER WELTER
1869-1947

ROSE WELTER
1872-1947

JOHN B. WELTER
1874-1943

SUSAN WELTER
1876-

MATILDA WELTER
1880-

MARY AREND
1860-1925

JOSEPHINE AREND
1862-1928

FATHER ARNOLDI
1851-1940

V

(A) THE CHILDREN OF PETER AREND AND CLARA MATHIAS

MARY LOUISE, *b.* August 29 1860, *m.* Joseph Mathias (with dispensation from impediment of consanguinity in second and third degrees). Their children were: CLARA MAGDALENE; NICHOLAS ANDREW; LEWIS ANDREW; PETER THOMAS; ROSE. Nicholas Andrew and Peter Thomas died in infancy.

Mrs. Mathias passed away on August 8 1925 when not quite sixty-five.

JOSEPHINE ELIZABETH, *b.* October 9 1862, *m.* John Niederkohr. Their children were: SALOME; CHARLES; WILLIAM; HARRY; VERENA; URSULA; PETER; BERTHA; LAVINA; MARTHA.

Mrs. Niederkohr expired on November 2 1928 at sixty-six.

(B) THE CHILDREN OF NICHOLAS WELTER AND CLARA MATHIAS

Peter	*born*:	Feb. 10	1867	*died*:	Feb. 20	1867	*aged*:	0
Catherine		Mar. 13	1868		May 21	1893		25
Peter		Dec. 13	1869		Sep. 21	1947		77
Rose Elizabeth		Jul. 29	1872		Jun. 26	1947		74
John Baptist		Feb. 27	1874		Sep. 15	1943		69
Mary Susan		Sep. 7	1876					
Josephine Matilda		May 26	1880					

CATHERINE MARRIED FRANK X. WAGNER on May 27 1890. Attended in her first childbirth by a doctor who came to her from a diptheria patient, she contracted the disease and died not many days later. The child was: ALFRED, who died as an infant.

Mrs. Wagner is buried in St. Boniface Cemetery at New Riegel.

PETER MARRIED MARY KIRIAN on November 12 1894. Their seven children were: AGNES (*m.* Albert Bistner; *ch.* Mary); EVELYN (*m.* Thomas Reinhart; *ch.* Mary Louise, Joseph, John, Louis); CLARENCE (*m.* Marie Buchman; *ch.* James, Elizabeth, Marjorie, Alice, Martha, Clarence, twin Carolyn, twin Marilyn, Donald, Jeanne, Thomas, Geraldine, Janet, Rosemary); EDWARD (*m.* Carmen Prindele; *ch.* Harold, Dorothy, Olive, Marion, Frances, Jean); SYLVESTER (*m.* Lucille Kimmet; *ch.* Eugene); WILLIAM (*m.* Clara Gillig; *ch.* Richard, Agnes Ann, Mary Jane); LORENA (*m.* Dan Reinhart; *ch.* Lucille, Paul, Donald, Cletus).

Mr. Welter, who was bedridden for many months before he breathed his last, was laid to rest in St. Mary Cemetery at Tiffin.

ROSE ELIZABETH MARRIED M. C. CLANCY on August 19 1895. Their seven children were: MARIE (*m.* Edward Holtz; *ch.* Edward, Richard, James. John, William, Jeanne, Roseann, Carolyn Sue); LUELLA (*m.* Wayland B. Recker M.D.; *ch.* Lou Ann, Patricia, Robert, Mary); MATTHEW E., a priest of the Toledo Diocese; JAMES, a priest of the Redemptorist Congregation; ROSE M. (*m.* Alfred Murphy; *ch.* Thomas, Gerald, Michael, Patrick, Rose Rita, Charles, Alice Jean, Terrence, James, Linda); JOHN, who died as a baby; ROBERT (*m.* Betty Murpy; *ch.* Colleen, Diane).

Bedfast for ten days, Mrs. Clancy passed away of a general debility. Place of death was St. Richard Rectory at Swanton. Her body reposes in Gethsemane Cemetery at Lima.

JOHN BAPTIST MARRIED BERTHA WARNEMENT on January 30 1900. Their ten children were: PIUS (*m.* Frances Schwartzmiller; *ch.* Dorothy, Jane, Regina, Grace, Donald, Thomas); LEON (*m.* Marie Halter; *ch.* Richard, Robert); REGINALD (*m.* Viola Radcliffe; *ch.* Jeanne, Gerard); ALBERT (*m.* Eleanor Hobart; *ch.* Patricia, Susanne); RAYMOND (*m.* Ruth Miller; *ch.* Carol, Roger, Kathleen); MARY (*m.* Arthur Homan; *ch.* John Thomas); JOHN (*m.* Ruth Hart; *ch.* David, Constance, Mary); LEONA (*m.* Hugh Boyd; *ch.* Susan, Nancy Lee); MARGARET, who entered the Ursuline Convent as Sister Mary Borromeo; CARL (*m.* Virginia Kerr; *ch.* Barbara, Charles, Patrick).

Mr. Welter was afflicted with a heart condition which caused his death. His grave is in St. Mary Cemetery at Tiffin.

MARY SUSAN MARRIED JOHN SCHULTZ on November 4 1902. Their child was: RALPH (*m.* Florence Erard; *ch.* Richard, John, Donald, Susanne, Kenneth).

Mrs. Schultz dwells at 421 Prescott Street in Toledo.

JOSEPHINE MATILDA MARRIED FRANK KIRIAN on May 16 1899. Their six children were: GENEVIEVE (*m.* George Schultz; *ch.* Marie, Laverne, Francis, Marjorie, Louann); ETHEL (*m.* Robert Reinhart; *ch.* Rita, Marcella, Howard, Bernard); ANDREW (*m.* Sally Zuwart; *ch.* Sharon, Richard); MARY ANN (*m.* Paul Niederkohr; *ch.* Gerald, Joyce Ann); twin CYRIL (*m.* Mabel Zender; *ch.* Lawrence, Linda); twin EMIL (*m.* Helen Paulus; *ch.* Ronald, John, Catherine, Patricia).

Mrs. Kirian resides in New Riegel.

VI

ROSE WELTER: 1872 – 1947

THE BIRTH of Rose Elizabeth, fourth child in the Welter family, occurred in a log house situated on the north forty acres of their farm at Frenchtown, her mother then being thirty-two and her father forty-six. Born one day, the baby was baptized the next with her Uncle Adam and Aunt Rose for sponsors. Father Gloden who christened her made an entry of the event in the Baptismal Register of St. Nicholas Church in the following manner: "Rose, born July 29 1872 to Nicholas Welter of Befort, Luxemburg, and Clara Mathias of Big Spring Township, was baptized July 30 with Adam Simonis and Rose Guillaume (sc. Mathias) godparents—Joseph Gloden."

At two she was a tiny figure in the ~~progidy~~ prodigy of the shrine procession unwet by driving rain. At four she lay for six weeks face down in bed with a back seared by boiling starch. At five, as there was a school across the way from her home and the prospect of being with the children she saw collecting there was pleasant, she started to school. At six she stood with the older mourners weeping softly while they lowered her beloved and honored Grandfather Lewis Mathias in the grave.

The little red brick structure where she began to go to school, a one-room public school taught at the time by a certain Mr. Hauck, stands there to this day though long ago converted into a dwelling place. Because she was so very small her father often carried her to school on his back when winter came and the snow lay deep. Then when she grew a little older, she used to go over and build a warm fire early in the morning, so that the room was in comfortable condition when the teacher and the pupils arrived. But when she reached the age of eight, it had come time for her to start in at the parochial school a mile away up the road: a two-room school (one up, one down, besides the chapel) conducted by Sisters of Notre Dame. Here at twelve she was prepared for her First Holy Communion, made June 28 in '85 at the hands of Father Gloden. (*Earliest of our pictures is a tintype of her on this solemn occasion.*) In that same First Communion Class were found her cousins Elizabeth and John Mathias: one a daughter of her Uncle John, the other a grandson of her Great Uncle John Nicholas. That fall, her object being to get the equivalent of a present-day high school education, she re-entered the public school across from her house. The teacher there was Joseph Werling now, husband of Peter Welter's youngest girl, Elizabeth her first cousin. Under him she passed through Fifth Reader at fifteen, which was as high as one's schooling could go then.

Luxemburger still remained the Frenchtown settlement's official idiom. The schoolchildren talked English when left to themselves, but in both the public and the parish schools the language employed to impart instruction and hear recitations was Luxemburger. As yet it was heard familiarly on all sides. In the homes—and the Welters were no exception even though Mrs. Welter was a native American—Luxemburger was constantly used in conversation by the children with their elders as well as in the conversation of the latter among themselves. Father Gloden the pastor, hailing from the Mother Country himself, as was to be expected regularly preached homilies and sermons in Luxemburger from the pulpit of St. Nicholas Church.

Indeed, he the priest was the mainstay of the nationalism lingering on in the community. For the Church stood as an axis on which the lives of these people turned; and their affection for him was eager and unbounded if only because, single-handed, he had had transplanted to near-by Carey their lovely Old World devotion in

honor of Our Lady of Consolation. He was a pious man with a powerful voice that exhibited magnetic qualities. Children in particular found enchantment in Rogation Day processions with him, crossing over fields, he in his purple stole and purple cope calling for God's blessing on the crops and they, led by his vibrant tones, singing sacred hymns, reciting the beads, even echoing all the plain-chant invocations of the Litany Of The Saints. At other times it was not unusual to see Father Gloden driving his spotted pony about as he came and went along the roads of his country parish: and they deemed it a red-letter day for any man's family when the priest's buggy did him the high honor of turning into his lane.

Rose Welter was still a little girl in the fore part of his pastorate. And because she was little, the winters seemed immeasurably cold and snowy then. But she found enjoyment in winter nevertheless and, as youngsters will, made the very most of its attractions. Never to be forgotten when the rail fences lay nearly buried with snowdrifts were the good times had in running along their zigzag tops and at fits and starts tumbling headlong with a shriek. And who cannot recall that frozen pond, like glass, in the field next to her house where girls and boys had great fun skating when the evening's chores were done? Summers, though, a famous device for spare moments of play was the swing rigged up in the orchard; and they would all take their turns swinging madly as could be and see who flew the highest up into the sky. Girls on the farm nevertheless did not expect to while away a summer day; and in fact there was mighty little free time left as a rule for a country lass like Rose from the world of duties she performed.

For there were homely dishes to be cooked and served out steaming-hot when the men-folk came in from the fields at summons of the clanging, cheery dinner bell; and when the meal was over, there were pots and pans heaped up that had to be scoured and plates and cups and pewter pieces that had to be washed and wiped and put back in place in the cupboards. Washdays you filled up the tub and wore your fingers down to the bone scrubbing garments on a launderboard; and then you blued and rinsed the clothes and wrung them out and hung them up on a line to dry, with an eye on the clouding sky that always seemed to hold a threat of rain. Other days you were busied dusting, mopping, baking, mending, making beds, and doing the rest of all there was to do inside; yet a body was outdoors nearly half the time, drawing bucket on bucket of well water when not bustling about hunting for the fresh-laid poultry eggs or pulling up weeds in the garden or churning butter or milking the cows morning and night and afterwards driving them to pasture. Then just when our wearied little women in sunbonnets had arrived at a much-needed breathing spell, an urgent call was sure to come from the fields for help and away they would go: to hoe or hill, to make hay, shock wheat, or husk corn, to pick berries, apples, or whatever was in season.

2

This is the life Rose Welter lived up to her marriage. When she was fourteen Father Matthias Arnoldi was appointed pastor; a year later he built the second St. Nicholas Church, in which an oil painting of the patronal saint was hung as the gift of her father. (*The picture of her in the frilled collarette is taken from her early teens.*) When not quite eighteen she acted as bridesmaid at her sister Catherine's wedding. She was nearly twenty when her father died. Like most young ladies raised on a farm, when she had passed out of the teens and they could spare her services at home there were jobs that she took doing housework away.

For a while she kept company with someone named Frank Rall. But at twenty-two she came across the man

MATTHEW CHARLES CLANCY
1873-1936

ROSE ELIZABETH WELTER
1872-1947

whose bride she was to be: Matthew Charles Clancy. They found themselves thrown together for the first at a Frenchtown church social in September of '94. (*From these early 'Gay Nineties' comes the fetching picture of her hatted.*) For several months it was merely a casual acquaintanceship, although to her pretty embarrassment he always took great delight afterwards in recalling how during that period he once happened to be riding past the Welter farm when lovely Rose was helping load manure. To this she invariably retorted that like his veracity this story he told must be taken with a grain of salt as it was clear as daylight he hadn't at all just "happened" to be by. Rose went to Fostoria towards the end of October to work successively for a lady named Goeckley and some Jewish people named Kohn. Matthew, who lived in Fostoria, was her escort sometime early in November to an entertainment held in the Knights of Columbus council hall. This, as both of them fondly recalled, proved to be the fateful occasion when their growing interest in each other burst its bud and showily flowered out in love. Rose then had to leave for Indiana to be at the side of Mrs. John Niederkohr, a half-sister bearing her fourth child. She returned directly to Frenchtown but was back in Fostoria a little later, this time working for the Mowerys. Absence, it appears, had only made the heart of each grow fonder—and Miss Welter's engagement to Mr. Clancy was announced in June of '95.

Upon publication of the banns they obtained their marriage license at Tiffin and two days later, on August 19 1895, were wedded in a graceful ceremony in the Frenchtown church. The bride's pastor, Father Arnoldi, conducted the service; Garrett Berry and Susan Welter filled the offices of best man and maid of honor. The bride was twenty-three. (*The picture showing her wearing a dark neckband is the one mounted on their framed marriage certificate.*)

3

Soon tried in the fires of adversity, Mrs. Clancy was assayed as of purest gold: a valiant woman willing and anxious to share the weight of her husband's gravest misfortunes and grief and proving a tower of strength and reassurance to him in his every hour of great need. Together they bore the cross of the dray line's lingering blight and decay, together sank down into the black of poverty, until even the solace of still being together (that paltry crumb of comfort) was taken away when the need of survival tore them apart in the spring of '97. Rose went back to her mother's at Frenchtown and Matthew came there at week ends from employment found in the oil fields at Cygnet. That summer she learned she was pregnant. That fall he took a railroad job in Columbus and she went to join him at Christmas. They waited in awe then for their first child's coming. But, when the time of delivery was at hand, no sooner did she start labor than the raging Scioto sent its swirling flood waters to swallow up the house where she lay in pain. They evacuated her by boat in that condition from the second story of her home. The baby was a girl born the next day, March 25 1898. Rose named her Marie Clara: Marie, seeing that this was the Day of the Annunciation; Clara, with the idea of honoring the baby's Grandmother Welter.

Afterwards the family, now numbering three, lived a year in Toledo. They came to Lima in the summer of 1900. There Harriett Luella, their second girl, was born April 29 1901 at 514 N. Elizabeth Street. The father travelling out to the Southwest that fall, the mother took the infants and went back to the farm at Frenchtown. But we find all four together again early next spring and living in the house at 514. (*Our picture of her with a baby's arm resting on her shoulder is copied from a family portrait made at that date.*) In due time two boys were born at the same address: Matthew Edwin on May 7 1903 and James David on May 2 1905. Rose led

her family of young ones to Cleveland in the spring of '07 to be with their father working there. But they are found back again in Lima and residing at 531 N. West Street four months later. Here Rose Margaret was brought forth July 30 1908. In the summer of '10 Mrs. Clancy returned to Frenchtown with a heavy heart to bury her mother. And June 30 1911 she had to mourn the loss of her baby John Nicholas who died only a few hours after birth.

But there was happiness lying in the offing. For Rose had been a woman of decidedly frugal ways, a wife and mother who handled the family funds with utmost care, pinching pennies for expenses and whenever possible setting something aside whether against a rainy day or towards the dawn of a brighter year. And in consequence of her thrift, augmented by her share in the proceeds of sale of her mother's property in January of '11, she had now garnered enough savings from her husband's pay to warrant their owning a home. The house at 1016 N. Elizabeth Street which the Clancy family occupied in August of '14 under a twenty-year mortgage was sweet fulfillment of this dream. Robert William, last of the children, was born there May 10 1915, a few months before the twentieth anniversary of his parents' wedding.

The years of her child-bearing had been hard years for Rose and choked with sufferings and privations; but she had lived them eagerly and bravely, glad to be sacrificed for the good of the family herself, really relishing the entire humdrum and never-ending burden of waiting upon husband and children, and always feeling privileged and proud to do them humble and menial service. The love she bore for them was one with her love for God, because the wheel of her life turned upon the Faith. And so it was that without ever swerving in the slightest from her purpose she had striven to instill a true Christian spirit and implant a lively Catholic piety in her sons and daughters, moving them by her own example most of all. Formerly the family being situated virtually within shadow-range of St. Rose Church—first at 514 N. Elizabeth, then at 531 N. West—Father Manning, the pastor, had been a dominant figure in their lives and their affairs. After the founding of St. Gerard's in '16 they were in sight of the parish church from their new home too; and the Redemptorist Fathers Behr, Mulligan, Kenzel, Clark, and McGowan all left a lasting imprint on their souls.

None but a mother can ever come to know such soul-deep satisfaction as was known by Rose during the Twenties and the early Thirties when her three daughters all made good marriages to Catholic husbands and two of her sons became priests of the Church. This was her life's summit, lifted high above all the clouds that cast shadows on the earth. Going on—and the course of life does ever lead on—her path plunged down into dim and twisting valleys where, lurking there to tax her strength and take toll of her health, were the five years which saw her beloved husband an invalid in the home and her ministering to his needs night and day. But by God's mercy they were still at each other's side in 1935, their fortieth year of wedlock; and their rejoicing sons and daughters rallied round them on that anniversary in a festive observance of the ruby jubilee of their conjugal love. When Matthew died in '36 she took comfort in her youngest son Robert being at home. But in the Second World War Robert entered his country's service; and in this absence of her devoted last child Mrs. Clancy continued on alone at 1016. He married Betty Murphy in '44 while still in the Coast Guard and after his separation from the service he and his wife lived with her for a time.

In August of '46 Mrs. Clancy, selling her home, gave up housekeeping and went to stay with her oldest son Matthew, the pastor of Huron; he was transferred to the parish at Swanton one month later and she moved there to take up residence in the new rectory with him.

4

Though no one knew it yet, she was drawing near the end of her days and was not many months for this world then. Occasionally she would return to the old home at 1016, owned by Rose and Alfred Murphy now, and stay a while to visit with her descendants and some of her oldtime friends there. Her final Lima trip, starting Easter Sunday of '47, ran from April 6 to May 4. On Memorial Day she journeyed to Tiffin and New Riegel to see her brother Pete and sister Tillie. On June 15 at the end of a week's stay in Leipsic with Luella's family she said she was feeling ill. And by God's eternal decree this was her last journey alive.

For she took to her bed then, her strength slowly and inevitably ebbing away until the one thin thread remaining to bind her to the land of the living was a longing to see her sons and daughters all together once more. Flying in by fast plane from Puerto Rico, Father James joined the group of loved ones at her bedside on the evening of the 25th. Strong, tender mother that she was, she had held on with all her might to the unraveling fringe of her life for the sake of this last fond farewell. That night she sank into a coma. Viaticum had been brought to her by Father Matthew day by day in this illness. Now both her priest-sons took turns leading the rest in saying the Prayers For The Dying for their dying mother through the night. That morning, the morning of June 26 1947, Mrs. Clancy gave her soul back to her Maker in the parish house in Swanton at the age of almost seventy-five. The funeral was held from St. Gerard's in Lima on June 30; and she was laid to rest at her husband's side in Gethsemane Cemetery, where a stone monument stands over the grave.

She had been an enthusiastic church worker, a faithful member of the parish Altar Society, and a daily Communicant all down the years. And it is worth a memorandum too, as revealing her ascetic temper, that she kept the black fast on Good Fridays. Yet she enjoyed living and relished life, among other things setting store on the good friends she made by belonging to the B.&O. Veterans organization as well as always drawing an extraordinary pleasure from the ordinary meetings of her card club. Loving flowers, she paid loving attention to her garden beds; and it was her delight to cull their blooms for the altars in church and for her front parlor. She made many improvements too on the house at 1016 and renewed most of its furnishings in her last years.

A striking black-haired beauty in her youth, she had kept a trim figure and a personable appearance through the years. But it is for rare qualities of heart and soul that she will long be remembered. For—even-tempered, gracious, and innately unselfish—she exhaled a fragrance of personality that by its inimitable sweetness and charm won everyone whose good fortune it was to know her. And as her crowning glory she will be constantly revered in memory for a peerless wife and mother. Her husband's eloquent praise has fallen mute now in death; but as long as voice remains to her sons and daughters you may be sure the name of Rose has only to be mentioned and its praises will be sung.

VII

THE CHILDREN OF M. C. CLANCY AND ROSE WELTER

Marie Clara	*born:*	Mar. 25 1898
Harriett Luella		Apr. 29 1901
Matthew Edwin		May 7 1903
James David		May 2 1905
Rose Margaret		Jul. 30 1908
John Nicholas		Jun. 30 1911
Robert William		May 10 1915

MARIE CLARA. Attended St. Rose School through freshman year. Worked at Lima Tea Co., Lima Trust Co., Lima Telephone & Telegraph Co. Married Edward A. Holtz (1893-) on July 5 1922.

The Holtzes lived for a while in Huntington, Indiana; otherwise have always resided in Lima, where they now dwell at 1124 N. Main.

The eight children are: EDWARD, *b.* May 19 1923, *m.* Marie Hughes, *ch.* Rosemarie Elizabeth, Irene Francis; RICHARD, *b.* March 14 1925, *m.* Jeanne Ann Dorley, *ch.* Gregory; JAMES, *b.* June 5 1926, *m.* Mary Arntz; JOHN, *b.* April 7 1929; WILLIAM, *b.* August 16 1931; JEANNE, *b.* June 18 1933 (now Sister Edward Marie O.S.U.); ROSEANN, *b.* May 23 1935; CAROLYN SUE, *b.* December 18 1938.

HARRIETT LUELLA. Went through St. Rose School. Worked at Garford Motor Co., Lima Telephone & Telegraph Co. Married Wayland B. Recker M.D. (1902-1950) on June 29 1926.

The Reckers live at 20 W. Main in Leipsic, where the Doctor always had his practice.

The four children are: LOU ANN, *b.* May 16 1927, *m.* Jerome Dohm; PATRICIA, *b.* February 27 1930, *m.* William Kolodzik; ROBERT, *b.* May 25 1931; MARY JANET, *b.* August 11 1933.

MATTHEW EDWIN. Schools attended after St. Rose's: St. Charles College, Catonsville, Maryland; St. Gregory Seminary, Mt. Washington, Cincinnati; North American College, Rome, Italy. Degrees obtained: Doctorate of Philosophy at St. Thomas Academy; Doctorate of Theology at Propaganda Fide University.

Ordination to priesthood: Basilica of St. John Lateran, December 22 1928, by Archbishop Pallica. European travels: Italy, France, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Austria, England, Ireland. First High Mass: St. Gerard's on August 4 1929.

Assistant at Toledo Cathedral: 1929-1941. Pastor of Huron: 1941-1946. Pastor of Swanton: since 1946.

JAMES DAVID. Was educated after St. Gerard's at: St. Mary College, Northeast, Pennsylvania; Redemptorist Novitiate, Ilchester, Maryland; Mt. St. Alphonsus Seminary, Esopus, New York.

Received religious habit in 1926. Professed in 1927. Ordained to priesthood on June 19 1932. First High Mass at St. Gerard's on June 26 1932.

Missionary in Puerto Rico—at Maricao, Aguas Buenas, Mayaguez, and Puerta de Tierra—from 1932 to 1947. Since then in residence at St. Clement Mission House, Ephrata, Pennsylvania, and in charge of St. James Parish at Lititz.

MATTHEW CHARLES CLANCY
1873-1936

ROSE WELTER CLANCY
1872-1947

MARIE CLANCY
1898-

LUELLA CLANCY
1901-

MATTHEW E. CLANCY
1903-

JAMES CLANCY
1905-

ROSE CLANCY
1908-

ROBERT CLANCY
1915-

ROSE MARGARET. Graduated from St. Gerard Grade School and from St. Rose High School. Worked at Doyle's Grocery. Married Alfred T. Murphy (1908-1952) on September 18 1928.

The Murphys have always lived in Lima, where their address of recent years has been 1016 N. Elizabeth.

The ten children are: THOMAS, *b.* November 29 1930, *m.* Marie Cira, *ch.* Terrence, Debra Lynn; GERALD, *b.* March 26 1933; MICHAEL, *b.* May 23 1935; PATRICK, *b.* June 9 1936; ROSE RITA, *b.* July 9 1937; CHARLES, *b.* October 5 1939; ALICE JEAN, *b.* October 28 1941; TERRENCE (deceased), *b.* February 15 1946; JAMES, *b.* October 15 1947; LINDA, *b.* November 5 1948.

JOHN NICHOLAS. Died on the day of his birth.

ROBERT WILLIAM. Completed St. Gerard Grade and High Schools. Enlisted in U. S. Coast Guard in 1942; obtained electrician's rating; assigned to destroyer-escort *U.S.S. Durant;* saw World War II service in the American, European, African, Middle Eastern, and Pacific areas. Married Betty Murphy (1921-) on October 21 1944. After having worked for Gro-Cord, Firestone Company, and Kelley's Dairy, accepted permanent employment as brakeman and yard foreman with B.&O. Ry.

The Clancys have always lived in Lima and now reside at 719 N. McDonel.

The two children are: COLLEEN CECILIA, *b.* October 3 1945; DIANE ELIZABETH, *b.* February 23 1951.